FRAMES OF MIND

A. B. WALKLEY

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BY

A. B. WALKLEY

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NOTE

These papers have been reprinted, with a few alterations, from the Daily Chronicle, *the* Speaker, *the* Star, *and* Cosmopolis, *by the courteous permission of the several Editors.* *A. B. W.*

THE PLAYHOUSE

The Taming of Tragedy

The Law of Change.—Every fresh revival of a tragedy must be a new reading. The taste for tragedy is peculiarly subject to Mr. Alfred Allmers his "law of change." But what *is* the law here? To answer that question you had better, perhaps, begin by trying to get at the basis of tragic emotion. You must begin somewhere—even if, like Alice in the Caucus race, you can leave off when you like.

Tragic emotion, I have said—question-begging at the outset—as though that were bound to be something distinct, on a different basis from comic emotion. But is it? Socrates apparently thought not. I am willing to admit that, on this or any other subject, Socrates is a bad authority. I have always longed to see some competent man come out with a smashing pamphlet: "The Truth about the Platonic Dialogues; or, Socrates Exposed." The Socratic method—with its sophistries, its "bluff," its downright paralogisms—would not nowadays deceive an infant.

Then "why drag in" Socrates? Because, in this particular instance, he seems to have arrived (though, I make no doubt, by hopelessly faulty reasoning) at a sound conclusion. It was at the Symposium, *the* Symposium, that great feast of hard drinking and high thinking of which you have heard. The general company were all under the table—or would have been if the Greeks put their liquor on tables—but at cock-crow Socrates was still conversing with Agathon and Aristophanes, and showing them that tragedy and comedy are essentially one. He talked them both asleep, and at daybreak went about his usual business. So like Socrates—mean enough to keep sober at a drinking bout! What arguments he used to demonstrate the essential identity of tragedy and comedy we do not know. Agathon and Aristophanes, being drunk, could not tell. We shall never know. All we know is that they were soporific.

After that, people left the question severely alone for a long time—for over two thousand years, in fact. Then M. Émile Faguet—without a suspicion apparently that he had been anticipated by Socrates—took it up and offered us the essential identity of tragedy and comedy as a brand-new "find." He, at any rate, does not send one to sleep—though of course I have not tried him at cock-crow after "making a night of it." Is there any essential difference between comedy and tragedy? asks M. Faguet—and answers: None whatever. There is only a difference of degree. The same subjects are comic *and* tragic. They are comic so long

as the passions set to work involve consequences of little gravity; with consequences so grave as to be terrible, they become tragic. And they both appeal to the same feeling in the spectator—the feeling of ferocity, our inheritance from primitive man, more or less modified. To a comedy as to a tragedy we go to enjoy the spectacle of human suffering—slight suffering, provoking laughter, or severe suffering, provoking tears, as the case may be.

In the playhouse, then, we are all unconsciously proving Darwin's case; it is the trysting-place of the primeval savage in all of us. But as we are no longer absolute savages, the spectacle of human suffering only pleases us up to a certain point. We want to be thrilled, but not to be horrified. In other words, we like to see other people suffer without suffering ourselves. That is M. Faguet's way of putting it. He does not flatter the playgoer. Indeed, I do not see how any playgoer can retain his self-complacency after this ruthless exposure of his playgoing mood.

But that is no affair of mine. My affair is to get at the "law of change" in the taste for tragedy. And I think M. Faguet's three categories ought to put us on the right track. You have the "comic," the "tragic," and the "horrible," all offering the spectacle of suffering —a pleasant spectacle in the first two cases; unpleasant in the third. My point is that these three categories in the process of time all tend—after the fashion of the Mad Hatter and the Dormouse at the tea-party—to move down one place.

What was "comic" tends to become "tragic," and what was "tragic" to become "horrible." Here are a few instances at random. Shylock was once a comic part. So was Tartuffe. Hamlet's "mad" scenes were intended to provoke a laugh from the Elizabethans. Half the matter of Molière's "comedies"—the mental agony of Harpagon, the bamboozling of Arnolphe, the betrayal of George Dandin, the jilting of Alceste—now strikes a chill. It is cruel, to the point of ferocity. These are cases of the comic turned tragic. As for the tragic turned horrible, Marlowe and Webster and the minor Elizabethans will give you scores of instances. In any modern revival of "Macbeth" we may safely reckon upon *not* seeing the slaughter of young Macduff in his mother's presence. Here what was only tragic for the Elizabethans has become horrible to us.

As a counterpart to this, you have the tendency in our modern actors to give Shakespearean tragedy its lightest possible interpretation. I think I shall be able to show how in Richard, Sir Henry Irving did his utmost to sink the tyrant and put forward the humorist, and how Mr. Forbes Robertson offered us a Hamlet with the gloom left out—a man of positively sunny temperament and youthful charm. To appreciate the changed point of view, you have only to look at the picture of John Kemble handling Yorick's skull.

But the clearest sign of the times is the demand that tragedy shall shift its ground altogether. The tragedy of violence is felt to be a survival from our barbarian

ancestors—we would supersede it, if only to please M. Maeterlinck, by the grandeur, the pathos, the mystery of humble day-by-day existence :—

"Is it while I flee before a naked sword that my existence touches its most interesting point? Does the soul only flower on nights of storm? . . . One may say that anachronism dominates the stage, and that dramatic art dates back as many years as the art of sculpture. . . . To the tragic author, it is only the violence of the anecdote that appeals . . . and he imagines, forsooth, that we shall delight in witnessing the very same acts that brought joy to the hearts of the barbarians, with whom murder, outrage, and treachery were matters of daily occurrence. Whereas it is far away from bloodshed, battle-cry, and sword-thrust that the lives of most of us flow on, and men's tears are silent to-day, and invisible, and almost spiritual."

In other words, out of the old Aristotelean "pity and terror," we are seeking to eliminate the terror. Everything makes for the taming of tragedy.

In "Hamlet."—A singularly luminous piece of criticism was once casually hit upon by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in a letter to Mr. Gosse: "It seems to me that all poetry, to be really enduring, is bound to be as *amusing* (however trivial the word may sound) as any other class of literature; and I do not think that enough amusement to keep it alive can ever be got out of incidents not amounting to events." If this is true of all

poetry, then it is true of all tragic poetry; and if true of all tragic poetry, then it is true of "Hamlet." That looks at first sight like a *reductio ad absurdum.* For we have accustomed ourselves to think of "Hamlet" as the typical tragedy of "inspissated gloom," of the turn for melancholy, the Albert Dürerism, in the Northern race. I say that we have accustomed ourselves, but am not sure that we have not been rather the victims of a conspiracy between our players and our scene-painters. We have been shown a Hamlet crushed under a burden too grievous to be borne; a *détraqué*, a sick man, exacerbated in temper, and with nerves perpetually on the rack. Elsinore has been made a place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Whatever else it may have been, this mode of presenting the tragedy has not been "amusing." It has weighed on our spirits like a nightmare. We see this depressing tradition at its culminating point in Garrick, whose Hamlet must have been what the Americans call a "holy terror." "Would you not, sir," asked Boswell, "start as Mr. Garrick does, if you saw a ghost?" Johnson answered, "I hope not. If I did, I should frighten the ghost." Since Garrick's time Hamlet has gone on "putting on weight," as the sportsmen say. If the ghost has not been frightened, he must often have been bored. Elsinore has fairly earned the new title of "Crotchet Castle, or Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie."

It has been reserved for Mr. Forbes Robertson, one of the most intellectually alert and fastidious actors

the English stage has now, or in all probability ever had, to compel us to reconsider, to re-adjust, to revitalise our conception of "Hamlet." He has taught us how we may be "amused" by this tragedy—and that in a wider than the Rossettian sense. For, of course, we knew already that the play abounds in "incidents amounting to events"—ghosts walking, Court entertainments, assassinations, insurrections, suicides, funeral pageants, fights, alarums, and excursions—in short, a bustling, rapid, vivid action, full of a certain sort of "amusement." But that is only the outside of the play. The novelty of Mr. Robertson's achievement consists in the lesson that the inside, the kernel, the life and soul of the play—Hamlet's *vie intérieure*—is, rightly considered, "amusing," too.

He has shown us Hamlet's busy, curious, hedonistic, characteristically Renaissance temperament asserting itself triumphantly again and again, reacting against uncongenial circumstance, automatically and almost light-heartedly throwing off the burden of the ghost's "mission," revealing itself as a "sunny" temperament of youth and life and charm. In his "Trésor des Humbles," M. Maeterlinck says: "J'admire Othello, mais il ne me paraît pas vivre de l'auguste vie quotidienne d'un Hamlet, qui a le temps de vivre parce qu'il n'agit pas." "Auguste" is good, as Touchstone would observe. There is something superb in Hamlet's interest in life and emotion and speculation, whenever he "has time to live." He picks himself to pieces and dwells lovingly on every piece, like Montaigne. He has Bacon's

ardour for experiment and understanding, "taking all knowledge for his province." With Sir Thomas Browne, he is an amateur of the curious and the recondite. To my thinking, this "Hamlet" is not merely a great world-tragedy—that is a commonplace—but an almost unique illustration of the *growth* of the human spirit, of the gulf between to-day and yesterday, of the truth that two generations can never be, in M. Alphonse Daudet's phrase, *du même bateau.* Here is my reason. We know that for his framework Shakespeare took the plot of an earlier play. That play was a *vendetta*-drama, a type which is well-nigh the most ancient in the history of all drama, a type of which the Oresteian trilogy is the classic example. Here, of course, the early stage only reflected the importance of the wild justice of revenge in early societies. What prompted Shakespeare to fasten upon a "revenge" story was, no doubt, its popularity. In what way this story appealed to him personally I do not know. Nobody knows. But one may hazard a guess; and I guess that, when once he had taken it up, he found his framework of "revenge" story something of a nuisance. I guess that all his interest went out to his hero, not as an avenger, but as a projection of himself—as being and thinking what he, William Shakespeare, would be and think, all ghosts and missions and family vengeance notwithstanding. That, beyond all doubt and cavil, is Hamlet's attitude. Commentators speak of his being crushed by his "mission." Why, he seizes every opportunity of putting

it out of sight! Fresh from his interview with the ghost, when other men would be still dazed by the shock, he is told of the arrival of a troop of strolling players. Does he say, "I am not in the mood for these trifles now, I'm a changed man, I must not be disturbed in my great business of revenge"? Not a bit of it. His face lights up; his mind starts off at a tangent to the things of the theatre. He spouts one of the players' speeches. He gives them a lecture on the art of acting. That the players may be of use in his "revenge" business is a thought that only comes to him later, and, as it were, by the way—when he has time to spare from the far more important business of art and of *l'auguste vie quotidienne.* And so, when the players with their "mouse-trap" have helped him to corroborate the ghost's story, is he overwhelmed by the terrible truth, as a man full of naught but his "mission" would be? Not at all; what he at first shows is the joy of the scientific investigator whose experiment has "come off." The justiciary who still has his task to do is lost in the successful detective, whose task for the moment is done Follow Hamlet to the last Act, and you shall still find him jumping at any chance of forgetting his "mission." If he meets a gravedigger he must needs stop and "draw him out," measure wits with the fellow, let the flavour of his rustic philosophy melt (like any other *bonne bouche*) on the tongue. Osric comes to invite him to a bout of fence with Laertes. He accepts with eagerness. What is the "mission" of a lifetime to a stirring

half-hour with the foils? Throughout one seems to see Erhart Borkman in Hamlet, and to hear Erhart's cry: "I wasn't born to be a missionary; I want to live, live, live!" All this virtuosity and dilettantism of Hamlet, his keen interest in life as a game to play at and to think about, his courtesy and grace, his sympathy for all things human, his intense vitality, leave a cheerful, almost exhilarating and gay impression upon the mind, which goes far to mitigate the chill cast on it by the tragic gloom of the plot. In a word, Hamlet is discovered to be capable of "amusing" us. In this matter, I venture to predict, Mr. Robertson will be the pioneer of a fashion. No actor will henceforth venture to take up a Shakespearean classic without seeking and bringing to light that enduring virtue of the classic which Rossetti called its power of "amusement," without an attempt to offer it as something fresh and alive, something which makes a direct appeal to ourselves to-day. The reign of "tradition" for its own sake is over.

In "Richard III."—A popular humorist once described an English actor's Hamlet as "funny without being vulgar." There would be no sarcasm in this description were it to be applied to Sir Henry Irving's Richard III. For what Shakespeare wrote as "The Tragedy of King Richard III." is a tragedy no longer. This play, too, has undergone the "law of change." In the theatre, perhaps, as elsewhere, it is easier to note the changes than to formulate a "law" for them. But

one law, I think, may be stated with some confidence: in a "mixed," or tragi-comic, character, a blend of the serious and the grotesque, it is the serious element which waxes in process of time, while the comic element wanes. The reason is that our forefathers were more thick-skinned and brutal than ourselves, nearer the child, who even to-day will laugh at a hump-back or the village idiot. Sheer ugliness, for instance, revolts us; it merely amused the Greeks, and Aristotle classified the ridiculous (τὸ γελοῖον) as a species of turpitude. Even Cicero thought that bodily deformities were "satis bella materies ad jocandum." The Elizabethans laughed, and were intended to laugh, at the madness of Hamlet, the despairing rage of Shylock, and the helpless contortions of Caliban. Molière's patrons laughed, and were intended to laugh, at the venomous malice of Tartuffe, the stiff unworldliness of Alceste, and the atrocious sufferings of George Dandin. Nowadays these characters have all undergone the "law of change," and we ask in wonder how our ancestors could have had the heart to find them "comic." Even comparatively modern plays—notably "The School for Scandal"—have been affected by this law of change. Charles's uncontrollable laughter in Sheridan's "screen scene" now jars terribly upon the nerves. The general rule, then, is that when a character (or a scene, or a play) is compounded of two colours, tragic and comic, it is the comic colour which fades and the tragic colour which remains "fast." A famous chapter of Montaigne was

headed by Florio "How we weepe and laugh at one selfe-same thing." Here is an example of the fact not considered by the philosopher.

But does this law of change explain why Richard III. is no longer a tragic character? Obviously not, for here the event is exactly contrary to our rule; it is the comic colour which is "fast," the tragic which has faded. It is the function of tragedy to kindle us to pity and to terror. On the face of it "King Richard III." should be rich in both emotions, for it depicts the heartless murder of innocent babes, the cajolery of tender women to their hurt, the swift slaughter of men of all ages and stations. The stage is bathed in blood and piled with corpses. But, as a matter of fact, we feel neither pity nor terror. For who are these hapless victims, these women and children and rivals near the throne? They enter, speak a few words, and are gone. Virtually they have no character, no existence, nothing we can enter into and sympathise with, and grow accustomed to—so that when their ghosts reappear, in company, in Richard's dream, it is as much as we can do to distinguish one unit of the crowd from another. In short, we do not pity them, because we do not know them. As for Richard himself, he is no man but a monster, and we simply cannot believe in him. Before villainy can inspire terror it must carry conviction. Apparently your stage villain carried conviction to the Elizabethan audience by the simple process of openly declaring himself for what he was. He came forward with a

scowl and the opening sentence, "I am the villain of this play." That, at any rate, is what Richard does. Hardly has the curtain risen when he explains to the public at large that he is "determined to prove a villain," and is "subtle, false, and treacherous." Lest any features of his villainy should escape you, he points them out for you himself, like a lecturer with a blackboard and a wand.

> I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
> The secret mischiefs that I set abroach
> I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And thus I clothe my naked villainy
> With old odd ends stolen out of Holy Writ;
> And seem a saint when most I play the devil.

Thus Richard sums up his own character, as though he were More or Holinshed; he contrives, in despite of the French proverb, to "look out of the window" while still "joining in the procession." And so the Elizabethan spectator was convinced, for he had his information "on the best authority." Richard must be a terrible villain, he seems to have argued, for Richard says so, and if Richard doesn't know, who does? And he was terrified accordingly.

Not in this way is the modern public to be convinced. For we know that whatever varieties villainy may present, it is seldom self-conscious, and practically never self-advertising. We have sat at the feet of Lombroso, and learned that the wicked man is, in the eyes of science,

either a sick man and an unfortunate man, or else a born criminal, "built that way," a man with a peculiar skull, finger-tips, ear-lobes, and nervous plexus, who produces villainy as unconsciously and naturally as a rose-tree puts forth roses. The modern stage, no less than modern science, has familiarised itself with both types. Of the second, for instance, there is a superb specimen in Augier's Maître Guérin, an arrant rascal, yet highly indignant with a world which would brand him as one. For he has acted in good faith, and in accordance with his nature; he simply does not understand. The other type is illustrated by Ibsen's Krogstad, who shows us how a rascal is essentially not unlike but like ourselves, so that when we see him we say to ourselves, "There, but for the grace of God, goest thou!" Or, take a more complex type, again from Ibsen; listen to Rebecca West explaining how she helped to drive Beata Rosmer into the mill-race. "You think I was cool and calculating and self-possessed all the time! I was not then the same woman as I am now, as I stand here relating it all. *And then there are two sorts of will in us, I believe!* I wanted Beata away, but all the same I never believed that it would come to pass. And yet I *could* not stop. I *had* to venture the least little bit further. *That is the way such things come about.*" Now that is very far from being the way such things come about in "King Richard III." Richard is cool and calculating and self-possessed all the time; and there is no hint of two sorts of will in him. It is easy to see

how a modern dramatist would have to handle Richard in order to carry conviction. Either he would present him frankly as a pathological "case," at once a megalomaniac and a homicidal lunatic who "sees red," or else he would show him compelled to act as he does by strong reasons of policy, by a belief that his actions are for the best, by a feeling that he "had to venture the least little bit further." Of the two modes suggested, the dramatist would probably reject the first, inasmuch as the spectacle of sheer madness, of the will divorced from the reason, is not suited for the purpose of drama, or any other art. But the second mode would both convince and move us, as showing us that we are all potential Richards.

And now we are in a position to formulate our second "law of change"; which is that the tragic villain, naïvely self-revealing and studiously self-advertising, tends to become comic, now that we have learned to understand that "people don't do these things," at any rate in this way. We laugh at him as we laugh at the detection of any attempt to impose on our credulity. Our laughter is increased by the very excess of his crimes. To compute them would tax the resources of a ready-reckoner. One murder would be terrible; two or three merely astonish; a round dozen send us straightway on the broad grin. And our laughter swells into a roar when we find the King, "with his crown on," as the children say, and seated on the throne, turning to the nearest page for the address of the nearest murderer—

KING RICH.—Boy!
PAGE.— My lord?
KING RICH.—Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold
Would tempt unto a close exploit of death?

Our tragic villain has become a tyrant of comic opera! He falls into line in our minds with Mr. Gilbert's Mikado, gloating over the invention of a fresh torture, "something with boiling oil in it," and with Alice's Queen in Wonderland, who never opens her lips but to shout, "Chop off his head!"

It says much both for Sir Henry Irving's acumen and for his courage that, despite all stage traditions to the contrary, he not only perceived the transformation of Richard, in relation to the public, but insisted upon giving full effect to it on the stage. There was not a comic feature of Richard's villainy which he did not bring into relief. He made the man openly laugh at himself, and revel in his crimes. When the humorist in Richard is at his best—as when he plays Don Juan with Lady Anne, or Tartuffe with the Lord Mayor—then Sir Henry was at his best, too. But, as I began by saying, if he made the most of the fun, it was peculiarly true of him that he was "funny without being vulgar." He was "always a gentleman—not a vulgar stabber," as was once said of an earlier actor in the part. Charles Lamb speaks of "the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity, the profound, the witty, the accomplished Richard." Sir Henry showed us these qualities; but he showed them to us in the right light, as not inconsistent with what has now become an essentially comic character,

A Renaissance Play

"*Dr. Faustus.*"—In Mr. Thomas Hardy's "Woodlanders" a village girl says to her tempter, "You go on like the Devil to Dr. Faustus in the penny book." We are to conclude that a chap-book familiar to Londoners in the days of Elizabeth is still read in the heart of Wessex. Though no copy of it happens to have fallen into my hands, I am quite sure that it is unlike "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," which Christopher Marlowe is said to have founded on it. For the play is what no chap-book could ever be, a severely academic exercise. It is written for scholars, about scholars, by a scholar. It bristles with Latin quotations, and, what is even more significant of the public to which it was addressed, with incomplete quotations—passages terminating abruptly in an "etc.," as though merely indicated by a University lecturer to an audience who are no less familiar than he is with the context. Faustus himself is, in Marlowe's picture of him, pre-eminently a scholar. Every undergraduate is aware that there is always a great man of

his "year," a prodigy of erudition, who has taken the Hertford, and the Craven, and the Ireland, and is reputed in his "viva" to have floored all the examiners. Faustus is that man. What he doesn't know isn't knowledge. The same halo of omniscience is over him as was over the late Master of Balliol. He is the archetype of the undergraduate's hero, and the play is the typical bookworm's play. This Faustus is not the magic-monger of the chap-book, nor the ironic philosopher of Goethe, still less, of course, the sentimental Don Juan of Gounod's librettists, but simply a bookman. Throughout the play Marlowe makes books the great factor in Faustus's life, and they even become important stage "properties." In the very first scene you have Faustus taking up the Hundred Best Books of the period one by one, and reading extracts from them aloud—Aristotle and Galen and Justinian and Jerome's Bible. "Books that have influenced me," he might call them all, in the style attributed to celebrities by the modern interviewer. By means of a book Mephistophilis confers magical powers upon Faustus—

> Here, take this book, peruse it thoroughly;

and Faustus's final cry as the devils are carrying him below is, "I'll burn my books." That is the bookman's notion of the supreme sacrifice. Even when Faustus is not taking books and perusing them thoroughly, he is asking other people questions out of them. Sometimes the subject is astronomy, as when he asks Mephistophilis

"How many heavens, or spheres, are there?" and "Why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, some less?" Sometimes it is climatology, as when he explains to the Duchess of Vanholt how "the year is divided into two circles over the whole world; that, when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba, and farther countries in the East." Even when he goes to Rome, it is not to do as the Romans do, but, as the chorus gravely informs us, "to prove cosmography"—oddly enough anticipating the feat which M. Zola performed after the same expedition—and Mephistophilis is not so much a tempter as a *cicerone* who has crammed up the guide-book, and imparts useful information to his pupil, as Mr. Barlow imparted it to Harry Sandford. So that at times the play has the air of an examinee's nightmare.

Looking at this aspect of the play, you will be tempted to compare Marlowe's picture of Faustus's mind, or rather his projection of his own mind into Faustus's, with the passion for knowledge as knowledge of Diderot and the Encyclopædists. But of course this passion was an even more conspicuous characteristic of the men of the Renaissance, and Marlowe's intellectual curiosity is easily paralleled in Montaigne and Rabelais, and, to take an extreme instance, in that last-born child of the Renaissance, Sir Thomas Browne. There is another peculiarity of the Renaissance which is very strongly

marked in Marlowe's play. I mean its queer hybrid quality, its incongruous juxtaposition of things Christian and things Pagan, its medley of Mediævalism and Hellenism. Zwinglius (whom, I hasten to say, I have not had the pleasure of reading; my authority is M. Émile Faguet's "Seizième Siècle") provoked the indignation of Bossuet by peopling heaven pell-mell with Adam, Jesus, Moses, Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, and Cato: and in the "Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum" of Ulrich von Hutten, you find Jesus compared to Cadmus and Semele to the Virgin Mary. So in Marlowe you have Faustus striving to forget Lucifer and the mediæval hell with Helen of Troy, and dreaming the dream of Ronsard and Wordsworth, the dream of being "a pagan suckled in a creed outworn":—

> I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
> Instead of Troy shall Wertemberg be sacked;
> And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
> And wear thy colours on my plumèd crest:
> Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
> And then return to Helen for a kiss.

The same curious jumble of past and present ideas is seen in the desire of the Emperor of Germany to be shown the spirits of Alexander and his "paramour." In short, "Dr. Faustus" breathes the spirit of the Renaissance in every line. It is the glorification—for of course one sees that the dramatist's sympathies are with Faustus throughout—of intellectual curiosity generally, and, more particularly, of that "goût de l'exotique

à travers les temps" which Théophile Gautier ("Journal, des Goncourt," Nov. 23, 1863) fondly supposed to be a discovery of his own. Of passion there is really none. It is significant that, even when Helen is called up for the gratification of the students, there is no sensual appeal. It is rather a case of a University Extension lecture on the heroines of Homer with magic-lantern effects; and when the *séance* is over, the lecturer is thanked by his comrades for an "intellectual treat"—

> Since we have seen the pride of Nature's works,
> And only paragon of excellence,
> Let us depart: and for this glorious deed
> Happy and blest be Faustus evermore.

In modern revivals there has been an attempt to re-create the contemporary atmosphere, to have the play rendered with all the simplicity and crudity of its own time. But such experiments, to my thinking, are futile. We cannot rid ourselves of the accumulated ideas of three centuries, and put ourselves in the position of the Elizabethan spectator. Modern players may show us, approximately, what he saw; but they cannot, even approximately, enable us to see it with his eyes. Doubtless he was much affected by the good and evil angels who present Faustus with the arguments for and against at every juncture, and very probably he shivered, while he laughed, at the merry little pantomime devils, Baliol and Belcher, who torment the clown. For us the play has lost all impressiveness, save only, I think, in two of its features. One is the sombre melancholy of

Mephistophilis, a figure worthy of Milton, and a much grander conception than Goethe's mocking demon; the other is Faustus's despairing outburst in the final scene. Here, especially if we bear in mind the Marchioness's remark to Dick Swiveller about orange-peel and water, we may still get a kind of shiver. But on the whole, of course, the tragedy is no longer a tragedy for us, it is merely a curio.

Dramatic Dénouements

Mr. Pinero's Way.—When did Mr. Pinero first reveal, if not the direct influence of Ibsen, at any rate something of what may be recognised as the Ibsen spirit in drama? Many people, I daresay, would answer, "In 'The Profligate.'" Certainly, this was the first of Mr. Pinero's plays on the "New Model," and its root-idea might be expressed in the very words of Dr. Rank: "Everything in this world has to be paid for." But that idea is of course not particularly Ibsenian. Indeed, it had been worked out in our literature by George Eliot long before the Scandinavian drama had become an article of European consumption. It was as the first stage-adoption of this idea that "The Profligate" acquired its significance and importance. Events were shown as the inevitable outcome of character, and inexorable ethical law was felt to be dramatically as effective as the "destiny" of the Greek theatre. This was a bolt from the blue. Nothing like it had been seen on our stage within living memory, and "The Profligate" was acclaimed as a

masterpiece. It was scarcely that. Its thesis—maintained episodically by Thouvenin in "Denise"—that prenuptial chastity is equally incumbent on both parties to the marriage contract, was strained and a little mawkish. Its view of life was that of an unsophisticated schoolgirl. Curiously enough, the author offered alternative endings, just as alternative endings were provided for "Romeo and Juliet" and "King Lear" in the last century, a "happy" and an "unhappy" ending. In the one Dunstan Renshaw obtained his girl-wife's forgiveness, in the other he committed suicide. Note this "wobbling" of Mr. Pinero over his conclusion. It is a point to which one will have to return.

The date of "The Profligate" is April 1889. When, four years later, Mr. Pinero reverted to his theme that we cannot escape from our past selves, it was to give it at last its true and complete stage expression, to create a character throbbing with life; in short, to achieve that masterpiece which some too eager spirits had prematurely welcomed in the earlier play. Much had happened in the interval. Ibsen had left an enduring impress upon men's minds; the play-house world was in a ferment; there was what the economists call an "effective demand" for a freer and more fearless treatment of the drama, for a widening of the theatrical horizon. This demand "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" satisfied to the full. There was nothing exotic, nothing deliberately imitative, in the play. Its professional men, its chaperons, its boys and girls, its background, atmosphere, and

talk, were thoroughly English. But it was Hedda Gabler and Rebecca West who had made Paula Tanqueray possible. Paula was a study of a particular species of neuropathic woman rather than of the *genus* courtezan. She was temperamentally virtuous, accidentally vicious; as remote from the sentimental Marguérite Gautier on the one hand, as, on the other, from the noxious Césarine. The attempt to compare her with Augier's Olympe was a piece of sheer stupidity—there is no other word for it. What was there in common between the delicate, freshly observed, eminently natural woman of the English, and the conventional, brazen, intriguing harlot of the French play? The intricate plexus of nerve and brain that go to make up Paula are things undreamt of in Augier's crude and summary "psychology," and the difference between the two is the joint work of the Time spirit and Henrik Ibsen. Finer even than the study of Paula was the general burden of the play—the hopelessness of human endeavour in the face of inexorable fact. For there is no conscious villain in the piece; all the characters, Paula included, are working to good ends. It is circumstances—the past, and character as conditioned by the past—that bring the catastrophe. The whole has that air of inevitability which is the mark of great drama. Nor need the objection trouble us that the reappearance of Paula's old lover as her step-daughter's suitor was improbable. For this was a typical case of that probable improbability, the εἰκὸς παρὰ τὸ εἰκός of Agathon, upon which stress is repeatedly

laid in the "Poetics"—"It is probable that many things should happen contrary to probability." As for the dialogue of the play, nothing like it had been heard before on the English stage, nothing so simple, natural, and appropriate, yet at the same time rhythmical and choice, resonant with that intimate personal *timbre* which we call "style." Such a passage as the final one between Paula and her husband, wherein the woman surveys the long vista of dreary decay in store for her, would, it has been well said, if paraphrased into Elizabethan poesy or into Greek iambics, be hailed as "classical." Only one point is open to question, and again, observe, it is the ending. Would the real Paula have borrowed the late General Gabler's pistols from her sister in misfortune, Hedda? Until our alienist experts can give us clearer information as to the suicidal temperament, Mr. Pinero is perhaps entitled to assume its existence in Paula. And, as the assumption enables him to end the score of his play upon a "full chord" instead of a "suspension," its advantage is obvious.

After "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" Mr. Pinero stands forth as incontestably the primate of the English, as for the latter part of his life M. Dumas was of the French stage. Any further comparison between the two men would be idle and impertinent, so unlike have been the moments and the circumstances of their arrival. Mr. Pinero cannot match M. Dumas' magnificent output, nor has he any pretension to the European influence of that great master; on the other hand, he is a comparatively

young man, and it is not unlikely that his best work is yet to come. He has given us two more serious plays, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" and "The Benefit of the Doubt," both of them earnest in purpose, at once solid and brilliant in workmanship, and in a certain sense, perhaps, showing an advance upon "Mrs. Tanqueray" in that the subject-matter in either case is more subtle and elusive. Whether the difficulties of the theme in either case have been fully conquered is, however, a debatable question. Just as "Mrs. Tanqueray" showed an experiment in marriage vitiated and brought to naught by the disruptive forces of the characters themselves and the pressure of external circumstances, so "Mrs. Ebbsmith" shows the same forces, internal and external, frustrating an experiment in "free love." In essence, the new play is an ironic, and even cynical, defence of orthodox matrimony, its implied argument being that, grave as are the objections against regular unions, irregular unions are open to precisely the same objections, and to some others into the bargain. Agnes Ebbsmith is no "daughter of joy," but a somewhat frigid ascetic on the physical, and a visionary enthusiast on the mental side. She tries to establish a purely spiritual relationship, to "live the higher life," with Lucas Cleeve, and she fails because Cleeve is an average sensual man, only to be held by the bond of the flesh. She not only fails, but falls deeper and deeper into the mire, consenting first to play the "harem-woman"—the very part that had so revolted her in her legal marriage

—and then to form a third in a triangular arrangement of husband, wife, and mistress. The successive steps in this inevitable process of degradation have been indicated by the dramatist with extraordinary skill; there is much that is tragic in the woman's hard fight to keep the man of her choice, though it be at the cost of her ideals, her self-respect, her very womanhood. But the method of her redemption is by no means convincing. She is saved by a revulsion of feeling, the present of a Bible, and the intervention of a couple of Good Samaritans, an Anglican parson and his sister. Again, you see, the weak point of Mr. Pinero's play is the ending.

And so it is with "The Benefit of the Doubt." Here is a play which appeals, in a far greater degree than its predecessors, to that instinct of curiosity which it is the primary business of all the "story-telling" in the world to satisfy. The spectator's interest in the action of the moment, great as it is, is not so great as his expectation of interest to come. His attention is directed from the first, until it becomes fixed with almost painful intensity, upon the ultimate issue. A woman has left the Divorce Court with her reputation not destroyed but seriously damaged. We know that, in fact, she has not "stooped to folly," in Goldsmith's sense of that phrase, but has only been guilty of thoughtlessness—the result, as is shown with consummate skill by the dramatist in his expository act, of bad breeding and vulgar surroundings. But the woman's husband does not know this, nor does the woman's rival, the wife of the friend with whom her

indiscretion has compromised her. At first the question uppermost in the spectator's mind is: Will she establish her innocence? She does establish it, but under circumstances so untoward that we are still in perplexity as to the final outcome. Or rather, I should say, we are perplexed in the theatre, where an outcome of some kind is demanded by the laws of the game. In real life we should be in little doubt; for it needs very little experience of human nature to know that men and women so antagonistic in temperament as are the couples in this play—a flighty Frou-Frou and a replica in hard wood of Sartorys, on the one hand; a jealous fury and a weak sentimentalist, on the other—though they may "kiss again with tears" for the moment, have a long vista of misunderstanding and unhappiness before them. But this is a conclusion, it is not a *dénouement*. For the stage something more immediate must be found, something of a climax. Mr. Pinero has found something, and a very queer find it is. Again the Anglican Church intervenes. A bishop out of his palace takes the place of the old god out of his machine, and Frou-Frou's reputation is to be whitewashed, as Agnes Ebbsmith's moral tone was to be restored, in a species of ecclesiastical retreat.

It has been no part of my purpose to examine Mr. Pinero's plays in minute detail, grateful as the task would have been with material so rich, so subtly worked, so engagingly modern. The object of my rough analysis has been to direct attention to this question of the *dénouement*. We might have guessed beforehand that it

would be a question of peculiar urgency. In truth, it is one of the points which mark off the new drama from the old. On the Greek stage—though Aristotle singled it out for especial consideration, for "many poets," he says, "tie the knot well, but unravel it ill," and "both arts should always be mastered"—the *dénouement* was of minor importance, because it was conditioned in advance by a plot universally known. There was no question of what the end should be, but only of how a foreseen end could be plausibly contrived. Renaissance tragedy, too, by whatever paths, had but one goal—the grave. Pure comedy, so long as it flourished, pursued pleasure always, and truth only as an occasional parergon, so that it was bound to end in wedding bells or a burst of laughter. Shakespearean comedy terminates in a mere "recognition" of long-lost youths or in the arbitrary conversion of uncles or in the sudden dropping of masks. Look at the ending of "Tartuffe" or of "The Way of the World"; it is a thing puerile and null, only there because the entertainment must close ere the candles are burnt out. So there was truth in Lessing's gibe that heroines are given to dying of the fifth act. But in the serious play of problem or passion, the modern descendant of the old tragedy, that "burgess drama" which Diderot foresaw, though he was impotent to materialise his vision, the *dénouement* has acquired an altogether new significance. It has become not merely a termination, but a solution; it is no longer the emptying of the hour-glass, but the answer to a question; it is

the organism brought to its last stage of growth, the mango tree in full bloom produced by the juggler from under the handkerchief. And so it must be contained in the very germ of the play, as the oak is contained in the acorn. We must feel that it is true to the circumstances of the case, that it is the accurate resultant of the forces at work. In one word, it must give us the impression of inevitability. Now it is just that impression which is missed in the endings of "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" and "The Benefit of the Doubt." The Bible episode in the former play is not only not an inevitable, it is not even a plausible, sequel to the first two acts; the very name of "episode" which the pen spontaneously finds for it is its condemnation. The incident is not in causal relationship with the rest of the play; Agnes's moral struggle, the crisis through which she is passing, lies far away from formal religion. Ibsen, I make no doubt, is partly to blame. The stove into which Agnes throws the Bible is the stove into which Hedda threw Lövborg's manuscript; but there is this vast difference, that Hedda's act is consistent with her character, an outward and visible sign of her soul state, while Agnes's is precisely the reverse. Mr. Pinero has simply reproduced a stage effect, the externals of the thing, and in doing so has departed utterly from the spirit of his model. If the burning of the Bible is false enough, what is one to say of its rescue? Well, I cannot resist the uncomfortable suspicion that Mr. Pinero has here not been thinking of his play at all, but of his

public. This rescued Bible I feel is a sop to that fetish-worship of "the Book"—I mean the material, tangible thing of paper, print, and leather—which still survives in certain classes of our community. Now that a man of Mr. Pinero's calibre should spoil the crisis of his play in order to make a concession to Little Bethel is, indeed, something which "gives us furiously to think." And this is not all. From one British fetish we are hurried to another. The Church intervenes, not as the Church, not as a spiritual comforter, but as an institution which confers "respectability." In "The Benefit of the Doubt" we have the same conclusion, though there it is even more flagrantly inadequate and impertinent. How ludicrous is the disproportion between the fierce soul-struggles of the unhappy people in this play, and the short cut to social salvation provided by a bishop with a house in town for the season! The thing, I declare, reminds me of those quack advertisements wherein, after a blood-curdling catalogue of all the ills that flesh is heir to, you are promised an immediate cure in one small-sized box of Somebody's Liver Pills. If this conclusion had only been offered to us with a note of irony, with a nod and a wink, I could have understood it; but no, Mr. Pinero is serious to the verge of pompous solemnity.

And this brings me to another point. We have seen that Mr. Pinero's plot-solutions have a tendency to be weak, and that it behoves him to consider the maxim *respice finem* in a new and special sense. But we have seen more; beyond his method, we have had, unless I

am much mistaken, a glimpse of Mr. Pinero's mind. It is customary to speak of the drama as the most objective, the most impersonal, of the arts; and so without doubt it is. But it *is* an art, and as such must, in the ultimate analysis, be an expression of the artist's personality. The playwright is often represented as something apart from his work, as an agency working puppets by their strings. The truth is that the puppets are parts or projections of himself. His work, because it is *his* work, must take the colour of his temperament. His personages, if he be a true dramatist, will behave according to the law of their being; but they will also behave according to the law of his. In his choice of subject, in his style, in the moral content of his plays, behind the playwright we detect the man. And the nature of the man has much—far more, I am convinced, than most of us suspect—to do with the pleasure offered us by the playwright. Many plays, technically unexceptionable, logically unassailable, secretly offend us; many others, with obvious shortcomings of craftsmanship, vaguely gratify us. In reality we have been offended or gratified by our subconsciousness of vulgarity or generosity in the mind behind the play. I confess that much of Molière's work—I am aware, of course, of the historical point of view, and that the man must not be made responsible for the standpoint of his time—but, still, much of it is in fact spoiled for me by a feeling of something cruel and callous in the workman. On the other hand, Labiche delights me, not merely because of his comic talent, but because

I feel that the talent is part of a genial, tolerant, lovable character. How are we affected by our subconsciousness of Mr. Pinero's mind, his ideals of life, his conception of the cosmos? Pleasurably, I think, on the whole. The tone of his farces is frosty, but kindly. In his serious plays, as a rule, we are aware of a lofty moralist, an earnest striver after the right, inclined to austerity perhaps, but not inhuman. His last two performances, however, give us a peep of something not so agreeable. There is an unwelcome touch of narrowness, if not of paltriness, in his conventional attitude in regard to the British fetishes of Bible and respectability by benefit of clergy. Contrast this with the enfranchised—if sometimes fantastic—ideals of Dumas, or with the noble ethical indignation and ironic criticism of Ibsen—or rather, do not contrast it, the task would be too painful. It is difficult to resist the conviction that Mr. Pinero has not yet shaken off the cult of the Baconian Idols of the Market Place. A more thorough intellectual detachment, a more penetrating philosophy, will be required of him, if the drama is to become in his hands what all great drama should be, an agency energising and transformative, something that stirs the deeps of the world and changes the face of it.

Mr. Bernard Shaw's Plays

Not Plays.—It was Bentley who said to Pope about his "Iliad": "Very pretty, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." So might one say to Mr. Bernard Shaw about his "Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant": "Very pretty, Mr. Shaw, but you must not call them plays." He tells us himself that, when he set about writing them, there was much talk of "the New Drama," ending only in "the humiliating discovery that the New Drama, in England, at least, was a figment of the revolutionary imagination. This was not to be endured. I had rashly taken up the case; and rather than let it collapse, I manufactured the evidence." This strikes me as one of the many true words that are spoken in jest. The plays are obviously manufactured. None of them gives that impression of the inevitable which is the true test of organic life in art. None of them convinces you that what Mr. Shaw had to say was bound to be said in the form of drama and not otherwise. On the contrary, what you feel is that

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Mr. Shaw has certain things to say about the ideas and ideals of men and women, about social institutions and economic forces, and that the medium in which he shall express these things is a mere accident. He has said them at one time or another as a novelist, as an essayist, as a platform speaker, as an art critic, as a musical critic, as a dramatic critic. Now he happens to say them as a dramatist. The result is something that looks like a play. The ideas are distributed among various personages, differing in age and sex and dress and status; they carry on a dialogue; there is scenery behind them; the curtain goes up and down. But, all the time, in reality there is no play; there is only a game of intellectual battledore-and-shuttlecock. That is a very amusing game; to the dilettante, the epicure in ideas, these two volumes are a perpetual feast. But —with the single exception of "Arms and the Man"— there are no plays in them.

If this world were a world of pure intellect Mr. Shaw would be a dramatist. For him all things are either reasonable or unreasonable. For him the only "happy ending" is a Q.E.D.; the only tragic catastrophe, the Euclidean "Which is absurd." Like the gentleman with the dancing bear in Goldsmith's comedy, he would bring all things "into a concatenation according." The instinctive part of us, our subconscious self, the fundamental passions, the blind forces of nature, the unchastened will-to-live—these things he leaves entirely out of account. Hence he never once depicts life; he

merely draws amusing deductions from it. If the art of living were only the art of dialectic! Instead of that conflict of wills which is the essence of drama, Mr. Shaw gives us an intellectual debate; his people argue it out, and the one who argues best gets the prize. Not virtue and vice, not duty and inclination, but intelligence and stupidity are the opposing forces. There is no flesh-and-blood in these people; only a thinking apparatus. Their brains have been cultivated at the expense of their feelings. When they go a-wooing one is reminded of "The Loves of the Triangles." To Mr. Shaw the great drama "All for Love and the World Well Lost" must seem a barbarous survival from our remote ancestry. Passion in the women takes the form of "temper" (Julia in "The Philanderer," Blanche in "Widowers' Houses," Gloria in "You Never Can Tell"), or "managing" motherliness ("Candida"). Frankly, to my taste, all Mr. Shaw's women, from his insufferable little Girton prig Vivie ("Mrs. Warren's Profession") and his lying little *poseuse* Raina ("Arms and the Man") to the immaculate Candida herself, are detestable. Fortunately they don't exist. Women, no doubt, have these irritating weaknesses, or these equally irritating virtues; but they do not in life, as in Mr. Shaw's plays, make up the whole woman. As for Mr. Shaw's men, they are about as virile as Abelard. Their wooing perpetually reminds one of the scene between the Romany Rye and Isopel Berners in the dingle; for love you have a lesson in irregular Armenian verbs.

Considering the plays as what they are, arguments in dialogue, one has to credit Mr. Shaw with scrupulous fairness; he lets each side have its say. "I have allowed every person his or her own point of view," he says in his preface, quite justly. Fairness, perhaps, is easy where there is no deep feeling. But fair, at any rate, Mr. Shaw is. To only one of his personages—and that a very minor personage—does he betray instinctive dislike. This is the curate in "Candida," "a young gentleman gathered from the nearest University settlement, whither he had come from Oxford to give the East End of London the benefit of his University training. He is a conceitedly well-intentioned, enthusiastic, immature person, with nothing positively unbearable about him, except a habit of speaking with his lips carefully closed a full half-inch from each corner for the sake of a finicking articulation, and a set of horribly corrupt vowels, notably 'ow' for 'o,' this being his chief means of bringing Oxford refinement to bear on Hackney vulgarity." This is Mr. Shaw's one sneer, and, please sir, a very little one. I cannot help remembering that when Mr. Shaw visited Oxford they poured cold water on him, not metaphorically, but out of pails. The fact is Mr. Shaw loses his temper over what the profane call the "Oxford voice" and the "Oxford manner" for a very characteristic reason. He cannot explain them. Give him a thoroughly bad thing which he can explain, and he is all charity towards it. As thus: "Mr. Burgess enters unannounced. A vulgar,

ignorant, guzzling man, offensive and contemptuous to people whose labour is cheap, respectful to wealth and rank, and quite sincere and without rancour or envy in both attitudes. Finding him without talent, the world has offered him no decently paid work except ignoble work; and he has become in consequence somewhat hoggish."

The ἦθος of Mr. Shaw's personages is something curiously narrow and shallow. His good people are the people who have learned to *be themselves*, consciously and sturdily—what their true selves may be like being a matter of comparative indifference—the people who have divested themselves of illusions and see life clearly; his bad people are the people who have not the courage of their opinions—the quality of their opinions being of small account. It follows that they are all morbidly self-conscious; they come on the stage to explain themselves to themselves and one another; they have no unconscious, still less any subconscious, existence. Mr. Shaw seems to be under the impression that right action is the same thing as logical thinking, strength of character the same thing as clearness of vision, the art of living the same thing as the art of explaining life. Explanation, tracing causal relationships, is, in fact, Mr. Shaw's master-passion. A new explanation marks a crisis in a play. In "Candida" the poet explains to the parson why he is an unsatisfactory husband. His wife cannot subsist "on metaphors, sermons, stale perorations, mere rhetoric. Do you think a woman's soul can live on your talent for preaching?" Then Candida

explains both poet and parson, and ultimately herself. When there is nothing more to explain, the play is at an end. In "Mrs. Warren's Profession," Mrs. Warren (a procuress, if you please) explains herself to her daughter Vivie, and Vivie, a Girton girl, explains herself to her mother. Then they part, there being nothing left to explain. What is peculiarly droll is the delight with which every one gets explained, as though he or she were suddenly presented with a solution of self as a proposition in Euclid. No matter how uncomplimentary the explanation—its purport is as nothing to the intellectual pleasure of grasping it. Thus Raina, the heroine of "Arms and the Man," is flatly told by Bluntschli, a rough soldier, that she is a little liar. Here is the dialogue which ensues :—

RAINA (*gasping*).—I ! I ! ! ! (*She points to herself incredulously, meaning "I, Raina Petkoff, tell lies!" He meets her gaze unflinchingly. She suddenly sits down beside him, and adds, with a complete change of manner from the heroic to the familiar*): How did you find me out?

BLUNTSCHLI (*promptly*). — Instinct, dear young lady. Instinct and experience of the world.

RAINA (*wonderingly*).—Do you know you are the first man I ever met who did not take me seriously.

BLUNTSCHLI.—You mean, don't you, that I am the first man that has ever taken you quite seriously?

RAINA.—Yes, I suppose I do mean that. (*Cosily, quite at her ease with him*): How strange it is to be talked to in such a way, etc.

You have explained me to myself; take me, I am yours for ever—that is the tune of it all. Chamfort was wrong; love is not the *échange de deux fantaisies*, but

the *échange de deux explications.* Sometimes, it must be confessed, Mr. Shaw's passion for explanation leads him far. In "The Man of Destiny," General Bonaparte, meeting a female spy in an Italian road-side inn, seizes the occasion to explain the English colonial policy of missionaries and Manchester goods, and remarks that the Englishman "sells the children of his poor at six years of age to work under the lash in his factories for sixteen hours a day." All this because the lady had stated that her grandfather was an Englishman, and had hardly got the words out of her mouth when Bonaparte exclaimed: "Listen to me: I will explain the English to you."

In that sentence you have Mr. Shaw's plays in a nutshell. Their whole action and dialogue consist virtually of "Listen to me, I will explain $\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{yourself}\\ \text{myself}\\ \text{the Cosmos}\end{array}\right\}$ to you."

It is right, however, to add that the explanations are always amusing, often brilliant, sometimes profound.

Arma virumque canit.—There are very few plays which you cannot induce to analyse themselves in the mere process of describing their action. "Arms and the Man" is one of those very few. Its surface of fun and fancy and life-imitation belongs to so different an order of ideas from its substratum of thought and theory and life-criticism, that one is compelled to give the two elements separate attention.

First, then, for the surface. Scene: Major Petkoff's house in a small Bulgarian town. Time: immediately after the battle of Slivnitza. Raina Petkoff, a Bulgarian Lydia Languish, whose pretty head is stuffed with the romance of war—Italian opera war—is disturbed in her chamber at dead of night by a fugitive from the defeated Servian army, who turns out to be a Swiss mercenary—he had joined the Servian army because Servia is nearer than Bulgaria to Switzerland—Captain Bluntschli. He is a spent man, and no operatic hero. If Raina scolds him, he will cry. Food and sleep are the two things he craves most in this world at the moment. The romantic girl is delighted at the chance of playing on her own account the heroic game of hospitality she has admired as played by Ruy Gomez and the bandit in the second act of "Hernani," and she not only hides Bluntschli from his pursuers, but feeds him with chocolate-creams, and leaves him to close his eyes. Not, however, before he has opened hers. The pistol he presented at her head on entering, he now explains was not loaded. He is an old soldier, and it is only young soldiers who carry cartridges, the old hands carry "grub." Bluntschli always takes chocolate (as, by the way, the hussar in Mr. Pinero's "Dandy Dick" took a charcoal biscuit). "Why," says the disgusted Raina, "you are only a chocolate-cream soldier; not a hero like my betrothed, Saranoff, who was in front of the cavalry charge at Slivnitza." "Ah, yes," replies Bluntschli, "there is always one man in front—and you should see how the

poor devil is pulling at his horse!" And Bluntschli proceeds to give Raina a very different glimpse of war from her fancy-picture. Heroes? cowards; strategists? pooh! There are only two sorts of soldiers, the old and the young; and sheer ignorance of the art of war is the surest guarantee of victory. Bang go Raina's ideals of military heroism—and away goes the chocolate-cream soldier in one of Major Petkoff's old coats.

Act Two: Peace has been signed, and Petkoff returns to the bosom of his family, with the heroic Saranoff. Here an interlude for fun over the fact that Petkoff's is the only house in Bulgaria with a library, a staircase, a supply of soap, and an electric bell—not surpassingly good fun; Mr. Shaw's conscientious determination to lay the "local colour" on thick has led him astray. The genuine fun begins with the meeting of Saranoff and Raina. To her he is the hero of Slivnitza, her prince. She is his peerless lady, his queen. They fall to calling one another these beautiful names, and to celebrating all the orthodox rites of the "Higher Love." But when Raina's back is turned, Saranoff strikes up a flirtation with her maid, Louka—and Raina peeps through the keyhole. She has half a mind to punish him by telling about the chocolate-cream soldier—when that gentleman returns. He has brought back Petkoff's old coat, and—consistently prosaic even in trifles—in a carpet bag. The Bulgarian officers invite him to stay and admire the library, the staircase, the soap, the electric bell, etc., little suspecting that he already admires Raina.

In Act Three we have the disillusionment of Raina completed, and a change of partners. We see the further adventures of Major Petkoff's old coat, and of Raina's photograph in one of its pockets, dedicated to "my chocolate-cream soldier." Raina perceives what Bluntschli has seen all along, that her heroic views of life are all mistakes—partly honest, partly mere pose—and she, the proud daughter of the noble Petkoffs (whose family records go back for quite twenty years), discards Saranoff (whose heroic refusal to withdraw from an entanglement binds him fast to Louka) for the unheroic, but manly and sincere, Bluntschli. This is a severe blow to the Petkoffs, for Saranoff had two carriages and half a dozen horses, until they discover that Bluntschli has seventy carriages (some to hold twelve outside) and two hundred horses—for, when he is at home, he is a Swiss hotel-keeper. Curtain.

So much for the surface—and yet I have not been able to give an adequate notion even of the surface; you will have to take for granted the witty dialogue, the whimsicality of incident that send the spectator into one prolonged fit of uncontrollable laughter. But after laughing some of us began to think, and many of us, I fear, to think wrong. This fun of Mr. Shaw's is all very well—so ran the general criticism—only it is not Mr. Shaw's. It was invented by the author of "The Palace of Truth" and "Engaged." It is merely second-hand Gilbertism. Now, to my mind this is a mistake, and a serious one. It is the business of criticism to

distinguish ; let us try and distinguish between Gilbertism and Shawism. Unless I greatly err, it turns upon a vital difference between two ways of regarding the current ideals of life and conduct. Mr. Gilbert never questions the validity of these ideals. He accepts them ; his personages accept them, but do not act up to them. Gilbertism, then, consists in the ironic humour to be got out of the spectacle of a number of people hypocritically pretending, or naïvely failing, to act up to ideals which Mr. Gilbert and his people hold to be valid. On the other hand, the very centre and axis of Mr. Shaw's position is that these current ideals are not valid ; rightly or wrongly he holds these ideals to be false ; and his personages, beginning by accepting them as true, are driven by experience to perceive that they are not, that the world won't fit them, and that life cannot be fully and freely lived until they are discarded. Shawism, then, consists in the ironic humour to be got out of the spectacle of a number of people trying to apply the current ideals only to find in the end that they won't work. The difference between the two "isms," you see, is enormous. The one merely presents the old, and essentially commonplace, contrast between current theory and current practice ; it seeks to demonstrate (and here is real cynicism) that man is bad because he cannot act up to his ideals. The other seeks to demonstrate (and here there may be wrong-headedness or false philosophy, but, assuredly, no cynicism) that it is the ideals which are bad—bad,

because unworkable, obsolete, cramping—and that man cannot be good until he has ceased trying to act up to them. On the correctness of this theory of life it is no business of mine to offer an opinion. But it *is* a theory of life; and that is the stimulating, the fascinating thing about "Arms and the Man." In the form of a droll, fantastic farce, it presents us with a criticism of conduct, a theory of life.

And now I think it is possible to see what Mr. Shaw is aiming at in those three odd personages—odd, until Mr. Shaw's theory of the falsehood of current ideals gives us the clue—Raina, and Saranoff, and Bluntschli. The two first are idealists. Raina believes in all forms of heroism, as delineated in the fancy pictures—heroic war, heroic young ladyhood, heroic love. Her chocolate-cream soldier dispels the first illusion; her own natural instincts expose the second; Saranoff's behaviour to Louka, and, again, her own natural instincts, destroy the third. "I have told a lie," she says at one moment in awestruck tones; "the second in my life." "Isn't that rather a short allowance, young lady?" replies Bluntschli. "It wouldn't last me out a single morning." She gasps. "How did you find me out?" The rest of this dialogue I have already quoted. If Raina has been "found out"—that is, if she has been to some extent a *poseuse*, only half-believing in her own idealism—Saranoff is on the other hand an idealist *pur sang*. He has the chivalric ideal. He is really brave —"In the charge I found I was brave; that, at least,

is real about me"—and with a strong sense of honour, shown not only in his dismay at finding himself slipping, behind Raina's back, into dishonourable conduct with Louka, but still more strongly, and indeed pathetically, in the catastrophe of his "reparation" (to use Professor Bellac's word, *Je reparerai, chère mees, je reparerai*) to Louka. "Damnation!" he exclaims, "mockery everywhere! Everything that I think is mocked by everything that I do." This, from the standpoint of Shawism, is the true tragedy of your idealist. Bluntschli (from the same point of view—remember that I am all along trying to explain Shawism, neither accepting nor rejecting it) is the real hero, the "man" of the title: sincere, capable, practical, unaffected, who sees that the current ideals won't work and dismisses them *sans phrase*—or, rather, is blessed with a temperament which has never been able to accept them. One might go on to consider the others from this point of view—Louka, for instance, who might then turn out to be something else than the mere designing chambermaid she appears at first glance to be. But enough, I hope, has been said to show that this play of Mr. Shaw's is a very remarkable and almost—forgive the upholsterer's adjective—unique piece of work. And yet, even as I write the word "unique," I am tempted to delete it, for what, after all, is the lesson of this very new kind of farce but that of the old kind, from Molière down to Labiche: the injunction *naturam sequere*—due regard being had to the difference between nature as Mr. Shaw sees it and nature as Molière and Labiche saw it?

"*The Ambassador*."—You may call "The Ambassador" a brilliant and delicate comedy, but you are bound to add that it is extremely thin. Its personages have more "manner" than solid character. We have no intimate knowledge of them. They do not get the chance of confiding in us. We see them in their social relations only, never alone. The very last moment of the play is typical of the whole. A man and woman have declared their love; it is a culminating point; some show of passion is clearly "indicated." But the *convenances* of the ball-room must be respected, and so we are fobbed off with this :—

> ST. ORBYN.—Juliet! (*He moves to embrace her.*)
> (*At this moment music is heard within: last valse beginning. Couples emerge from behind every bush, and out of every corner.*)
> ST. ORBYN.—Aren't we alone? (*Looking round.*)
> JULIET (*nervously*).—Oughtn't one to be dancing?

You think of the timidly shirked wooing in some novel of Miss Austen's. "John Oliver Hobbes" is of the sex of the gentle Jane. But so was Mrs. Aphra

Behn, who went to the other extreme, and "fairly put all characters to bed." As usual, it is dangerous to generalise.

And yet the temptation to find—or to fancy—the influence of sex in the writer's work is too strong to be resisted. It must be remembered that female dramatists are rare, very rare, notoriously rare. They are like the "strong women" of the music-halls, women doctors, women journalists, and other ladies who compete with men on what has hitherto been held to be men's peculiar ground. One is curious to see the difference resulting from sex—or, if one cannot see it, to see if one cannot invent it. Where, then, do I find the feminine touch in "The Ambassador"? First of all, in its eponymous hero. St. Orbyn should not have given the play its title. For as an ambassador he does not exist for us, nor even as a man of the world, but only as an inhabitant of the *Pays de Tendre*. The only side of him we see is the side shown to women. All his life, according to the Princess Vendramini, he has "let women make fools of themselves about him," and now at five-and-forty he is prepared to make a fool of himself about a woman. Either way, he is never free from the obsession of woman. It is characteristic of him that the only reference this ambassador makes to the Powers of Europe concerns women: "The Powers of Europe are getting sick of these devoted wives who think that governments can be dissolved by inviting the right people to a dinner, or the wrong people to a

crush." *L'homme à femmes*, the man in whose life there must always be a woman, if not a score of women, is, of course, an actual type. One thinks of Mérimée, and of how many more! But the Mérimée of the letters to Jenny Dacquin was also the Mérimée of the letters to Stendhal. St. Orbyn is a Mérimée who has been invented—all of a piece—by Jenny Dacquin.

Take, again, the rake of the play, that "dreadful man," as the good ladies call him, Hugo Lascelles. To be seen in his company is fatal to any girl's reputation. In reality he is only a sheep in wolf's clothing. His supper-party is the mildest of orgies. An American damsel performs a decorous skirt dance under the eye of her "mommer." It is the undergraduate's idea of dissipation: his aunt's bottle of gooseberry wine. A dramatist of the coarser sex would hardly have been content with offering us so insipid a beverage.

And is there not a trace of the feminine in the indulgent view taken of Vivian Beauvedere's freak? He has stolen a cheque for a large sum, and then forged the endorsement. Poor boy! He is so thoughtless! But Vivian is not Nora Helmer. He must have had much more precise notions of what he was doing. One remembers that women have not to administer justice, and have always been curiously tender towards lawbreakers.

But it is by the women of the drama that one unerringly detects the woman in the dramatist. Naturally John Oliver Hobbes is less respectful to women than a

man would be; they have no mystery for her—and she lets them have little mystery for us. They make love to the men, as women do in real life (I am told) frequently, but as the imaginary women of the male dramatist do seldom, if ever. Princess Vendramini invites St. Orbyn to see if the wind has ruffled her hair, to notice the expression of her mouth, and when the bait fails to take is frankly enraged by the *spretae injuria formae.* And take this passage between a couple who have just become engaged :—

GWENDOLENE (*rises*).—Won't you kiss me, Bill?

SIR WILLIAM (*approaching her*).—I thought I did.

GWENDOLENE (*after a pause*).—Yes, it does seem rather chilly. Shall we go in?

SIR WILLIAM.—You know we are such friends, dear Gwen, that you would not expect *raptures*, would you?

GWENDOLENE.—No—no—not exactly raptures!

SIR WILLIAM.—It is much more sensible, really, not to want you to catch cold.

GWENDOLENE (*walks up to him and looks into his face.*)—It must have been on such a night as this when Romeo climbed the wall of Juliet's garden. Oh, Bill, you do like me a little, don't you? People seem to think we are such icebergs!

SIR WILLIAM.—That's because people are fools. (*With sudden and genuine feeling, embracing her.*) I am simply, awfully fond of you. (*Kisses her.*) There, will that satisfy you.

GWENDOLENE.—Oh, quite!

I doubt if it would ever have occurred to a man to write that admirable little scene.

Nor would a man easily have invented the character of Lady Beauvedere, the slightly *passée* woman who

loves St. Orbyn, and has the mortification of seeing him enslaved by a girl of half her age. When a man puts a *passée* woman on the stage, he is apt—too apt—to make her ugly and ridiculous, the butt of all the youngsters in some uproarious farce. John Oliver Hobbes, as a woman, sees rather the pathos of the situation, and knows that pathos to be at its most poignant when beauty and freshness are beginning to wane, not when they are irretrievably lost. Lady Beauvedere is at an age when she finds it necessary to assure all her acquaintances that "she married very young." The farewell scene between her ladyship and St. Orbyn—the woman all dumb and helpless suffering, the man all tender and chivalrous consideration—was a little miracle of tactful writing; and its tact was unmistakably feminine tact.

Further, the women of the play use a frankness of language about one another which a man would hardly have ventured to put into their mouths. "I call her such a bounder," says Lady Basler of Mrs. Dasney; and, again, "I cannot think why St. Orbyn does not settle down, and marry poor old Rosamond Vendramini." And listen to the amenities of the new scandalous college:—

LADY BASLER.—How well Gwen Marleaze is bearing the disappointment! I admire her *so* much.

LADY ALLWEATHER.—So do I (*drowsily*). What with her long, long arms—some people *admire* an arm like a pipe stem—her amazing corpse-like complexion, and her large, mysterious mouth, I think her quite too fascinating!

LADY BASLER.—Oh, you wicked creature!

LADY ALLWEATHER.—Wicked? I assure you I admire her excessively. It is so difficult to describe a woman fairly. Words are so *bald*. By the bye, Edith, I did not see you at the Baron's wedding.

LADY BASLER.—I never go where I am not invited, but then *I* am peculiar.

In sum, the internal evidence, I think, ought to satisfy us that this play could only have been written by a woman. The result is nearly all gain; if the men of the story are a little out of drawing, the women are singularly lifelike, and we are shown little intimate phases of their *éducation sentimentale* such as have not hitherto been subjected to the glare of the footlights. And the whole play has a tact, a grace, an urbanity —a quality invented by women, if we are to believe Sainte-Beuve's account of Mme. de Caylus—which at once delight and flatter the spectator. He feels that he has been spending an evening with a witty woman of the world, who has condescended to be at her very best, and all to please him.

I have dwelt on the woman in the dramatist. One might also speak of the dramatist in the woman. That John Oliver Hobbes has the true instinct of the theatre was evident from the very first act. She gave us a "preparation" which would have delighted M. Sarcey. St. Orbyn advises Lady Gwendolene to leave off wearing a certain brooch, and to see the effect on the priggish Sir William, who gave it her. Mark the outcome in Act II:—

SIR WILLIAM.—She (Lady Gwen) has behaved in the most touching manner—not a reproach—but little things tell. She no longer wears a small gift I gave her—a trifle—a moonstone brooch.

ST. ORBYN.—Ah!

SIR W.—Every time I see her now I miss it, and it is as though a certain light had gone out of my life.

ST. O.—I attach, as you do, *immense* importance to the brooch episode.

SIR W.—I am glad you agree with me. That simple unstudied act, I assure you, has cut me to the heart more deeply than any scene, any appeal could ever have done. It is by these means—so artless and so infinitely pathetic—that women conquer us.

And then she knows that next to a "preparation" a theatrical audience likes a "surprise." I hardly remember a better stage "surprise" than that in the third act of "The Ambassador," at the moment when St. Orbyn has met Juliet at a late hour in the compromising company of Hugo Lascelles. Appearances are terribly against her. All experienced playgoers know what to expect: the lover will assume the worst, and challenge Lascelles. What does happen is this:—

LASCELLES.—Here is a fine scandal, and the worst of it is—I hope you won't mind it—but Miss Gainsborough has made me promise not to give you the smallest explanation of her visit here.

ST. ORBYN (*springing to his feet, radiant*).—Ah, I knew it! Dear, innocent little creature. I knew it! I knew it all along!

LASCELLES (*astonished*).—Knew what?

ST. O.—My dear fellow, if she had *not* been innocent, she would have insisted upon nothing *but* explanations for the rest of your life and mine.

Note that this is something very much more than a stage "surprise." It bases a dramatic action upon common sense, at the very moment when nine playwrights out of ten would base it upon convention. And, further, it deftly brings the play back into the key of comedy just as there was a danger of its modulating into drama. Indeed, nothing is more conspicuous in the play than the skill with which it is kept throughout on the plane of comedy. Most so-called comedies are dramas in disguise. "The Ambassador" is that very rare thing, a comedy which remains a comedy from first to last.

The Player Woman.—Miss Clo Graves predicts that

> The player woman, once despised, shall stand
> A power for good, a glory to the land.

This is pitching it a little strong, perhaps, but the thing may happen; you cannot refute a prophecy, anyhow. Meanwhile, the question is how the player woman stands to-day. I should be inclined to answer: In a much more comfortable position than the player man. Indeed, she has a far better case, I think, than is generally made out for her. Is the stage a career for women? is the modest question one frequently hears. As if there could be any doubt about it! A much more ticklish question to answer would be: Is the stage a career for men? The Shade of Plato, and Mr. Augustine Birrell, and Professor Raleigh, to name no other malcontents, would join in an emphatic No. The truth is, on the stage all the advantages fall to what our forefathers called the spindle side. A moralist of the last century

struck the balance between the sexes in this matter when he said that an actor was less than a man, an actress more than a woman.

It is the fashion, I am aware, nowadays to ignore the distinction between the sexes. There is Mr. Bernard Shaw's famous dictum, that "we shall never do any good until we recognise that women are just like ourselves, only a little worse educated." This may be true of actual life, though one has one's doubts; it is certainly untrue of stageland. There the distinction between the sexes is sharp. With absolute equality of talent the difference of sex gives the advantage to the woman. In going on the stage the woman always has something to gain, the man always something to lose. In the first place, the very limitations of the stage make for her, and against him. The fields of man's special activity, the fields into which woman enters rarely if ever, are precisely the fields which it does not suit the purposes of the drama to explore. Public life, for example, the business of government, the ministrations of the church, the labour of money-getting, the practice of the learned professions, the world of scientific discovery, of abstract thought—these are not easily reducible to terms of drama. Drama deals by preference with the domestic affections, marriage, love, jealousy, parental relationship—all matters in which woman cuts at least as important a figure as man. Man the philosopher, man the *strugforlifeur*, man the steady, plodding drudge, "gets no show." The instincts and the emotions are

the stuff of drama, and women are the instinctive and emotional sex. This is the weak side of man, and yet the only side that he is allowed to turn to the footlights. Antony was a statesman, a general, a strategist, but we only see him as the lover of Cleopatra. Faust was a philosopher; in the theatre he becomes a poor moonlight warbler in the company of Marguerite. The deeds that made Othello great we have on mere hearsay evidence; they are "what the soldier said"; we only see what a "worriting" husband he makes. Torvald Helmer was a first-rate bank manager; but the one thing he could do well he is debarred from doing on the stage. In "The Professor's Love Story" what do we see of the professor *as* professor? Nothing; we only see an absent-minded elderly gentleman making a fool of himself with a chit of a girl. In this sense, then, the stage is under petticoat government. And man may say to woman, "The theatre doesn't deal fairly between us; I can do all sorts of things that you can't, and these are the very things that are ruled out of the game."

Another consideration. As you saunter down Regent Street of a fine afternoon, with your eyes open, you may observe the faces of all the men you meet turned successively and automatically and at the same angle towards the same object. That object is a pretty woman, and her passage down the street thus causes a sort of ripple in the crowd of men. But you will never observe the passage of a man causing the same ripple in the crowd of women. The meaning of which is that it is

woman's part in life to be looked at, but that it is not man's. Now players are people who of necessity make a show of themselves. A woman, doing this in life, can do it on the stage without derogating from the dignity of her sex. She is merely pursuing her *métier de femme* in making herself beautiful on the stage, as every woman who can makes herself off it. But a man who occupies himself professionally with the business of being a "pretty fellow" is doing something a little unmanly. Nothing is so odious as the vanity of an actor on the score of his personal attractions. The simpering, posturing heroes of our West-end photograph shops make one's gorge rise. But the pride of a woman in her beauty seems a natural and proper thing, and the stage a legitimate place for giving that pride full sway. Indeed, feminine vanity there becomes *rangée*, as it were, and a valuable asset. It is as though you took a wild scape-grace and "made a man of him" with the Queen's shilling and the goose-step.

Note further that those special qualities of simulation, dissimulation, and *ruse* which, according to Mr. Herbert Spencer and other learned authorities, have been bred in woman during the centuries of her subjection to the will of man, are the very qualities which enable her to romp in an easy winner on the stage; for they are the basis of histrionic art. Is it not a commonplace to say that "every woman is a born actress"? In the little comedies of make-believe which all children play among themselves, you shall invariably find the girls taking the

leading part; it is the boys who are clumsy and ashamed, exclaiming, "Oh, this is all rot, you know."

The catalogue of the player woman's advantages is not yet exhausted. You may observe that between the actor and his part there is very often a disproportion which does not exist in the case of the actress. When you see an actor figuring as a Mark Antony, a Richelieu, a Napoleon, it is apt to occur to you that if Fate were suddenly to call upon him to play his personage in real earnest he would be somewhat embarrassed. Now an actress is generally on the level of her part. For one reason, because there is in life—at any rate, if we are to believe the physiologists—comparatively little difference between woman and woman; for another, because, notoriously, a woman can adapt herself to a new *milieu*, the dairymaid turn duchess, with marvellous suppleness; for yet another reason, because the emotions women are for the most part called upon to express on the stage—love, jealousy, self-sacrificing devotion, tender submissiveness or the fury of revolt—are emotions of which in real life they are perfectly capable. And even when the real woman is *not* on the level of her assumed character she can generally contrive to appear so by the exercise of a faculty in which once more she excels man—the faculty of what one of Dickens's people called "poll-parroting." "Pritchard," said Johnson of a famous Lady Macbeth, "in common life was a vulgar idiot; she would talk of her *gownd;* but when she appeared upon the stage seemed to be inspired by

gentility and understanding." Rachel is said to have been unintelligent, and merely to have "poll-parroted" the gestures and intonations of her master, Samson. . . . Looking at it all round, then, I submit that the odds are heavily in favour of the player woman.

Sarah Bernhardt.—After all, it is not Mme. Bernhardt's artistic genius, not her "glory," nor her eccentricities that make her the remarkable woman whom we know; it is her extraordinary vitality. Were she a mediocre actress or a mere tourist, her expenditure of vital energy would suffice to rank her among the miraculous, incommensurable, "dæmonic" people of the world. She seems to represent some new and mysterious natural force, like wireless telegraphy or the X rays. Take this example: On the night of March 31, 1882, she was playing at Naples, on the morning of April 4, she was married at the Greek Consulate in London, and the next day she was leaving Marseilles with her husband by special steamer for Barcelona. She has now been forty years on the stage. Naturally her looks are not what they were. "Kingdoms and states, as (according to Squire Western's sister) Tully Cicero says, undergo alteration, and so must the human form." Her hair, too, has turned by the inevitable process of time from raven black to golden. But her spring and spirit are as marvellous as ever. At an age when other actresses would be thinking of retiring, she achieves a new Hamlet. She may not be the greatest

of living actresses—people who have seen Eleonora Duse will have something to say to that—but she is beyond all question the most energetic.

The story of her life reads like a fable—and perhaps is one. For the mythopœic instinct in human nature insists upon having its wicked will with celebrated actresses. Perhaps Mme. Bernhardt never did tame an alligator, and kill it with too much champagne. But this is obviously the sort of thing she ought to have done—and, well, the compilers of legends know their business. Nevertheless, M. Jules Huret in "Sarah Bernhardt" professes to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. M. Huret overwhelms you with facts and figures; but his style does not inspire confidence. He wields that deadly weapon, "the pen of a ready writer." The Dum-Dum bullet is merciful by comparison. When you think of the thousands of these pens that are readily writing prose like M. Huret's in all languages every day, you may be excused for feeling that the Planet Terra is not, as the auctioneers would say, an eligible residential locality. For myself, I find M. Huret simply maddening. . . . He goes to pay a morning call on Mme. Bernhardt at her house in the Boulevard Pereire. But do you suppose he consents to put it in that bald way? Not he! We learn that he rang the bell several times; the house is not a house, but an adorable sanctuary; and from the moment of entering it M. Huret has an obscure but infinitely agreeable impression. It is doubtless as much physical as cerebral, he thinks;

the hypnotism of surrounding objects and the perfume of the air, the discreet songs of birds (why, one sighs, could not M. Huret borrow some of the birds' discretion?) and the intoxicating shimmer of stuffs. Perhaps what mathematicians call the Undulatory Theory of Light had something to do with it. For Sarah "undulates" on a divan, and even the fur rugs have "lascivious undulations." Man, said Montaigne, is "undulating and diverse"—evidently the statement should have included women and furs.

"A servant interrupted me in these reflections," says M. Huret. Blessings on that servant! But he should have arrived earlier. Sarah (tired of "undulating") volunteers some arithmetic; she has eighty travelling trunks, two hundred and fifty pairs of shoes, six thousand francs for every performance, etc. etc. Down it all goes in M. Huret's notebook. He hopes he has not been "indiscreet," but is politely reassured. Mme. Bernhardt is too meek; I should have been much better pleased if she had used one of her five hundred shoes to good purpose, and sent M. Huret undulating down the stairs. And that reminds me! It is in an account of Mme. Bernhardt going down stairs that M. Huret fairly surpasses himself. The occasion was the great banquet given to the actress at the Grand Hotel in the winter of 1896. Sarah descended from the first floor to the dining-room by a spiral staircase. But the staircase was not half so spiral as Sarah herself. For she wound her arm like a clinging creeper round the velvet pillars,

and the train of her dress followed her like a docile and graceful serpent. The dress, we are told, was pure white, trimmed with English point-lace, embroidered with gold, and edged with chinchilla. Further, the gentlemen present at the dinner, as well as the ladies, were in evening costume. Item: there were two horses to Sarah's cab. And somebody reads a letter from Mr. Wilson Barrett, who offers Sarah a silver crown—in prospect, as at present he can only enclose a pencil sketch. *Il ne manquait que ça!*

And while Mme. Bernhardt goes twining round velvet pillars, undulating through life generally, and spreading her travelling trunks before the Hurets of this world, I cannot help speculating as to her inmost thoughts. They, at any rate, are not edged with chinchilla. What is the real woman like, underneath all these trappings and amid all this "glory"? She has tasted every pleasure, gratified every caprice, talked with all the crowned heads; the Baltic Sea has been strewn with roses for her, and the swarthy Sir Walter Raleighs of South American Republics have thrown their dress-coats in the mud for her to walk upon. What does she think of it all? Surely the world must seem to her as one huge Bedlam; or else an Arabian Nights' vision, and she must pinch herself to see if she is awake or dreaming. For this enthusiasm of crowds for famous players attains to the monstrous, the chimerical. The proportions of things are lost; the world is out of perspective; the ordinary standards of life become a pedantic

impertinence. And all because a woman has (or had) a "golden voice," a certain trick of hissing through her teeth (learnt, she says, from the Dutch Jewess her mother), an exceptional aptitude for imitating the external aspect of emotions, love and hate, grief and terror, and, more especially, for "shamming dead"! We have become so used to this fury of enthusiasm, that we take it as an everyday matter of course; but, if you look into it, surely it is a more wonderful, inexplicable thing than the art that excites it? And whatever discount you allow (for there is a fringe—a chinchilla edging—of insincerity to it), there is enough of it remaining to constitute a "great fact," a serious fact, which provokes speculation. Great and serious things have their absurd side, of course; and the absurd side of this one is M. Huret.

Does Sarah ever try to divest herself, in thought, of all this "glory," and to realise what her personality would shrink to, say, on a desert island? Probably not. Probably this peculiar kind of genius cannot conceive itself apart from cheering crowds. Why meditate, why commune with yourself, when you can twine like bindweed round velvet pillars? With what relief one turns from the glare and din of such a record to the contemplation of simple, quiet, modest lives, to the thought of women with peaceful faces sewing in cool, dim rooms. And yet . . . and yet . . . flesh is weak, and curiosity is strong. *Did* she tame an alligator and kill it with champagne? I wonder.

Her Impossible Hamlet.—When all is said, Sarah remains a woman. Apart from all artistic considerations whatsoever, this constitutes a fatal objection to her Hamlet. It consists in the fact that we are not to be persuaded that Hamlet was Princess of Denmark. A woman who impersonates a man may give the spectator various kinds of pleasure, to be sure, but there is one thing she cannot give him, and that is illusion. Illusion, of course, may not happen to be the object, as, for instance, when a woman remains a woman for us in the stalls, and only becomes a man for her comrades on the stage. Examples, Imogen, Rosalind, Lady Ursula. Here the contrast of our own knowledge of her sex with their ignorance is part of the fun. But a woman playing Hamlet is in very different case. She has to unsex herself for us as well as for her comrades, and the task is impossible. If Mme. Bernhardt's figure and make-up and gait may deceive, her voice betrays her. Now illusion is by no means necessary to many kinds of theatrical representation, but in tragedy it is indispensable.

Speaking generally, one may say that the effect of drama on the mind of the audience is to produce a quasi-hypnotic state. Seated in a playhouse we fall at once into an abnormally receptive mood. For we have ceased to be individuals, and become what is a very different thing—units in a crowd. A crowd, as we all know, takes on a special character merely because it is a crowd. The qualities in which its members differ from one another tend to disappear, to be mutually

cancelled, while the qualities which they have in common are intensified by contact. Men differ, of course, principally in the conscious elements of character, the fruit of education, of varying hereditary conditions, and the intelligence. On the other hand, they resemble one another principally in their unconscious or subconscious qualities, the primary instincts, feelings, and passions of the race. It follows that to bring people together in a crowd is to diminish their intellectual and to increase their emotional energy. But a condition in which the emotional pitch is raised, while the intellectual pitch, the judicial faculty, is lowered, is the very condition favourable to the "suggestion" of the hypnotists.

There is a passage in one of Coleridge's letters which, I think, establishes him as the first to formulate a correct theory of this quasi-hypnotic state of stage illusion. "It is among the feeblenesses of our nature," he says, "that we are often, to a certain degree, acted on by stories, gravely asserted, of which we yet do most religiously disbelieve every syllable—nay, which perhaps we know to be false. The truth is that images and thoughts possess a power in and of themselves independent of that act of the judgment or understanding by which we affirm or deny the existence of a reality correspondent to them. Such is the ordinary state of the mind in dreams. It is not strictly accurate to say that we believe our dreams to be actual while we are dreaming. We neither believe it nor disbelieve it. With the will the comparing power is suspended, and

without the comparing power any act of judgment, whether affirmation or denial, is impossible. . . . Add to this a voluntary lending of the will to this suspension of one of its own operations (that is, that of comparison and consequent decision concerning the reality of any sensuous impression) and you have the true theory of stage illusion, equally distant from the absurd notion of the French critics, who ground their principles on the presumption of an absolute *de*lusion, and of Dr. Johnson, who would persuade us that our judgments are broad awake during the most masterly representation of the deepest scenes of 'Othello.'" Coleridge adds: "I have given you a theory which, as far as I know, is new, and which I am quite sure is most important as the grand and fundamental principle of all philosophic and of all common-sense criticisms concerning the drama and the theatre."

Yes, no doubt the mental state of the playgoer is half-way between absolute non-illusion and complete delusion. But the two extremes exist as exceptional cases. For the one extreme you may take Tolstoy's account (in "What is Art?") of a visit to "Siegfried." "When I arrived," he says, "an actor sat on the stage amid decorations intended to represent a cave, and which, as is always the case, produced the less illusion the better they were constructed. He was dressed in woven tights, with a cloak of skins, wore a wig and an artificial beard, and with white, weak, genteel hands (his easy movements, and especially the shape of his

stomach and his lack of muscle, revealed the actor) beat an impossible sword with an unnatural hammer in a way in which no one ever uses a hammer, and at the same time opening his mouth in a strange way, he sang something incomprehensible." That is the state of absolute voluntary non-illusion. Of the other extreme state of mind, complete delusion, the classic instance, I suppose, is to be found in Addison's account of Sir Roger de Coverley's behaviour at a performance of "The Distrest Mother." "When Sir Roger saw Andromache's obstinate refusal to her lover's importunities he whisper'd me in the ear that he was sure she would never have him; to which he added with a more than ordinary vehemence, 'You can't imagine, sir, what 'tis to have to do with a widow.' Upon Pyrrhus his threat'ning afterwards to leave her, the Knight shook his head, and muttered to himself, 'Ay, do if you can.' This part dwelt so much on my friend's imagination that at the close of the Third Act, as I was thinking of something else, he whispered in my ear, 'These widows, sir, are the most perverse creatures in the world.'" And so on and so on.

Joseph Jefferson tells a story against a friend of his who was playing Richard III. on the Texan frontier. When it came to the wooing of the Lady Anne, an indignant cowboy jumped up and shouted, "Don't you believe him, marm, he've two Mexican wives down in San Antonio." Here you have the curious case of the two extremes coexistent—complete delusion as to the action, and absolute non-illusion as to the actor.

In this matter of stage illusion there is a sharp distinction to be drawn between comedy and tragedy—and Lamb has drawn it in a famous essay. Comedy, which is designed to give us an agreeable consciousness of other people's infirmities, would, on the contrary, be disagreeable if it did not also convey the impression that the thing is "only acting," after all. Thus, a real coward is contemptible; Bob Acres is not. But tragedy, which aims at affecting the feelings, must illude. Lamb illustrates this by reference to the different sorts of truth which we expect when a man tells us a mournful or a merry story. "Our tears refuse to flow at a suspected imposition. But the teller of a mirthful tale has latitude allowed him . . ." To return to "Hamlet." As Shakespeare wrote it, no doubt it demands less illusion than most tragedies. For it makes, of course, an intellectual, quite as much as an emotional appeal—as for instance in all the scenes of reverie, philosophy, or artistic dilettantism in which Hamlet plays truant from the revenge-drama and becomes frankly William Shakespeare. Here, there is no question of illusion. But this element is exactly what Mme. Bernhardt leaves out; she degrades "Hamlet" from an intellectual tragedy to a tragedy of the emotions. And in that very process she cuts the ground from under her own feet. For to a tragedy of the emotions complete illusion is an indispensable requisite. And yet illusion is out of the question from the outset, for the simple reason that Hamlet is a man, whereas Mme. Bernhardt is not.

A Music-hall Type

Dan Leno.—Dan, *tout court*, of course. He was once introduced as Mr. Daniel Leno. It was by the chairman of a meeting of the Guild of High Endeavour. The unwonted dignity of the full-length name lured him into singing "The Lost Chord." It would seem that the meeting then broke up in disorder. When you come to think of it, the associations of the name Daniel are all solemn—Daniel Defoe, Daniel Webster, Daniel Deronda. Whereas those of the shorter form are all full of the joy of living, if not absolutely Rabelaisian—Old Dan Tucker, Dan Chaucer, Dan Godfrey, Dan Leno. Perhaps it is some subtle feeling for this affinity to Chaucer that accounts for the (not very recondite) archaism of the title "Hys Booke," which Mr. Leno has given to his autobiography. Of autobiography, by the way, in the stricter sense, there is very little in this opuscule. We learn the date of Mr. Leno's birth, 1861. It is an epoch-making date. *Enfin Leno vint*, you may say. But you find some difficulty in squaring it with the following statement:

"I became well known in Ireland, and at Belfast I had the honour to receive a high compliment from Charles Dickens, who saw me at the time he was lecturing there." If so, Mr. Leno must have been an infant prodigy indeed. Subsequently, Mr. Leno "started on the conquest of London by singing at three halls, the Foresters', Middlesex, and Gatti's, with songs and dances." [You will observe that Mr. Leno's style is a trifle Asiatic—unless it is possible to sing without songs.] "My first great success in the song line was a charming little ballad called 'Milk for the Twins,' for which I was disguised as a distressed female." Then came a long career of pantomime parts, generally female—whether distressed or jocund is not stated. The rest is anecdotage.

The book is by no means so funny as Mr. Leno's patter. And it is not because he has "commenced author" that one chooses to discuss him. In the Palace of Art (as several people have said after Mr. Pater) there are many mansions, and Mr. Leno is a distinguished tenant, but not of the one called "literature." By a slight modification of the figure you may consider art as an Inn of Strange Meetings. Was there not a historic interview between Victorine Demay, café-concert songstress, and Ernest Renan, author of the "Vie de Jésus" and other famous works? So one likes to imagine a meeting between Mr. Leno and (say) Mr. Lecky. Therefrom the historian might glean some startling views of contemporary life, and it is pretty certain that music-hall audiences would soon be presented with a new type

by Mr. Leno, a Lecky *pour rire* (and with dance). Meanwhile, no apology seems needed for considering Mr. Leno seriously.

For that phrase of his, "the conquest of London," by no means went beyond the fact. To the majority of Londoners Mr. Leno's personality must be much better known than Lord Salisbury's or Mr. Balfour's. That, to be sure, is partly because he can be personally inspected any evening for a shilling, while they cannot. But then he has an influence which they have not. What he says ("with song and dance") comes home to (Cockney) men's business and bosoms. Instead of high politics, which nobody understands, not even the politicians, he discusses latch-keys, mothers-in-law, "our court," the lodger, chuckers-out, and "booze"—themes which knock at the heart, stir the inmost fibres of being, are, in short, in Maeterlinckian phrase, at once the Treasure of the Humble and the symbols of Wisdom and Destiny. They are well-worn themes, and *difficile est proprie communia dicere*—which (in flagrant defiance of the view of Johnson and Boswell on the point) might for once be translated, 'tis difficult to give an individual turn to commonplaces. Now it is just that difficulty over which Mr. Leno triumphs. He takes the meanest little subjects, the follies and weaknesses of the unsophisticated vulgar to be met in all the tramcars and in most of Mr. George Gissing's novels—and by a touch of fantasy he gives them freshness, distinction, "style." But his fantasy, at its wildest, always has direct reference

to life. It is not fantasy for fantasy's sake, like the drollery, for instance, of Mr. T. E. Dunville, a sheer grotesque, a sort of animated gargoyle. Nor has it the sly irony of Mr. R. G. Knowles, the "very peculiar American comedian," as he chooses to call himself. Mr. Leno is too genial, too much in sympathy with his kind, to be an ironeïst. Mr. George Meredith has established the distinction. "If, instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod, to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him under a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered dubious whether indeed anything has hurt him, you are an engine of Irony." But "if you laugh all round him, tumble him, roll him about, deal him a smack, and drop a tear on him, own his likeness to you, and yours to your neighbour, spare him as little as you shun him, pity him as much as you expose, it is a spirit of Humour that is moving you." This gives us Mr. Leno's measure at once. He is a Humorist. Talking of Mr. Meredith (mention of whom is unaccountably omitted by Mr. Leno from his chapter headed "Among my Books"), one remembers that he has long been a smoker of that "Arcadian" mixture which Mr. J. M. Barrie has celebrated in "My Lady Nicotine." It now appears that Mr. Leno, in his hours of ease, smokes the same mixture. Meredith, Barrie, and Leno! Was there ever a tobacco with associations so glorious?

What one looks for in Mr. Leno's book—and of course does not get—is a glimpse of the man behind the

artist. Has he a *vie intérieure*, or a subconscious self? He professes to be somewhat of a pessimist. "Looking at the mysteries of time and space from a 'ten minutes' turn point of view, it seems to me that what a man wants is more—well, more, in fact, of whatever he has managed to get born with and picked up or dropped since. I have only met one man in my life who was perfectly satisfied with life, and he was always half drunk, and generally one and a half drunk." Here is the conqueror of London, the popular hero, hinting, not obscurely, that he is dissatisfied with life! "The Leno System of Philosophy," he adds, "regards the world as a football, kicked about by higher powers, with me somewhere hanging on to the stitching by my teeth and toe-nails." But apparently he means little more by this than that he has known sudden changes of fortune. "One week I was singing at the smallest hall in the town at 15s. a week, and the next I was engaged at the Exhibition Palace for £1 : 15s. a night." Now, he describes himself as a farthing millionaire. And to think that, not so many years ago, his ambition did not soar above winning the prize in a clog-dancing competition at Leeds! He promises us a sequel to the present book. "Looking through it again, I am most struck by the number of things I have omitted which might have left the world wiser than they found it; so that, as soon as I had finished, I felt like starting to write another volume." George Sand, it will be remembered, used to feel like that, too.

THE BOOKSHELF

Literary Egoism. — In Professor Knapp's "Life of Borrow"—an artless, garrulous book, but a triumph of research and, better still, of lovingkindness—you get many glimpses of Borrow the curmudgeon. To take a single example, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, his neighbour in Hereford Square, writes: "I told him I had been at a pleasant dinner-party the night before, and had met Mr. L——, who told me of certain curious books of mediæval history. 'Did he know them?' 'No, and he *dare said* Mr. L—— did not either! Who was Mr. L——?' I described that *obscure* individual (one of the foremost writers of the day), and added that he was immensely liked by everybody. Whereupon Borrow repeated at least twelve times, 'Immensely liked! As if a man could be immensely liked!' quite insultingly. . . . What did he think of the Brownings? 'Oh, he had heard the name; he did not know anything of them. Since Scott, he read no modern writer.'" This was Borrow's attitude to-

wards his contemporaries, and we may be apt to think it characteristic of him, peculiar to him and to men of his type. He was a narrow man, a wilful man, and, what is more, a disappointed man. Another disappointed man, the French dramatist Henri Becque, was notorious for the same attitude. He thought "Les Corbeaux" and "Une Parisienne," as Borrow thought "Lavengro" and "The Romany Rye," to have been unjustly treated. And so, when contemporaries were mentioned, Becque, like Borrow, played the curmudgeon. I have selected two men similar in one thing, but very dissimilar in all things save one, because they illustrate, if I am not mistaken, a general characteristic of the creative mind in literature. The creative mind shrinks instinctively from the thought of creations not its own. It seems to be on that condition that it *is* a creative mind. There is no need to multiply examples. They will occur to every one, from the mutual dislike of Corneille and Racine to Richardson's detestation of Fielding, and Dickens's—what is one to call it?—half-hearted appreciation of Thackeray. A less well-known case, perhaps, is that of Balzac's antipathy to George Sand. "N'ayez peur, madame," he writes to Mme. Hanska, "que Mme. Dudevant ne me voie jamais attaché à son char. . . . Je ne vous en parle que parce que l'on fait à cette femme plus de célébrité qu'elle n'en mérite, ce qui lui prépare un automne amer." He describes her latest book as "vide et faux d'un bout à l'autre. J'aime mieux les

ogres, 'Le Petit Poucet' et 'La Belle au Bois dormant.'"

People are wont to attribute this sort of thing to the vanity and jealousy of authors. But that explanation is too cheap. It is really part and parcel of the self-absorption which is a condition precedent of self-reproduction in literature. Disbelief in others, tending to a positive dislike of them, seems to be complementary to that self-confidence, not to say self-admiration, without which you cannot have triumphant self-expression. The common talk about "the modesty of true genius" is mere cant. In Alfred de Vigny's correspondence there is a typical revelation of the author's real need. It is in the last line of his last letter, written just before his death: "You talk a good deal about belief and believers. Believe in me, with a firm faith." Vigny passed for a singularly modest man, reserved, sensitive, shut up in his *tour d'ivoire;* but here he lays bare the pride at his heart, and at the heart of every creative writer. You are to believe in him—as he believes in himself—it is a necessity of his being. And read those wonderful letters of Balzac's, already cited. He says, "Père Goriot" is "grandiose." Again, "Si le 'Lys dans La Vallée' n'est pas un bréviaire femelle, je ne suis rien. La vertu y est sublime et point ennuyeuse." Also, another of his own books is a "delicious composition."

To call this vanity is absurd. It is the consciousness of power. Authors are not always so frank in admitting it, they are afraid of ridicule; but they have it, or

they would not be authors. They would be solicitors, or licensed victuallers — or critics. Whatever form literature may take, it is, in essence, the revelation of a personality. This is as true of the "objective" writers—to use the old-fashioned terminology—as of the "subjective." If it stares us in the face in a lyric of Shelley's, it is no less to be found, by those who have eyes to see, in a novel of Scott's. As Keble said, "the story is interposed, as a kind of transparent veil, between the listener and the narrator's real drift and feelings. The history of Waverley, or Henry Morton, or Ivanhoe, is but a pretext for the author's employing himself on those scenes, and characters, and sentiments which would best satisfy the cravings of his own ruling fancy." And yet we rail at the author for his sensitiveness to criticism! As if his work were not as inevitable, unmodifiable a part of himself as the very nose on his face! If his work is to be worth anything, he must "put his heart into it," as we say. Clearly, then, in striking at his work we pierce his heart. We complain of his work as out of harmony with this or that general conception of ours. But the author feels that it answers to a very different harmony, one of which we can know nothing, an inner harmony of his own; that it *must* be what it is; that it is a link in a long chain of cause and effect, hidden from us necessarily, hidden, too, probably from himself, but a chain which holds him captive. And we call him to account as though he were a free man! Naturally he wails: what is the use of criticism?

Every step we take, every expression that flits across our features, every mood, the smallest trick of manner —these things make up ourselves, they are penalties or rewards which we cannot escape. Your criticism of them, be it favourable or unfavourable, is bound to be unjust, for it is not *en connaissance de cause.* To know me you must know my spiritual history, and how are you to know that which I do not know myself? Life is so obscure a thing as to make all criticism a monstrous impertinence. Of a thousand emotions only one may come to the surface; the chances are (remember the disparity between language and emotion) that one emotion does not get itself accurately expressed; even should it, by rare luck, achieve full expression, it may be an emotion that gives no sort of clue to the rest. If I write about Shakespeare and the musical glasses, at the back of my mind there may be something quite different, something of which I am not for the moment conscious, but which has directly caused my mood, all the same—the dull ache, it may be, of longing for an absent friend. An author's work is the outcome of millions of hidden causes like these. Hence the futility of criticism.

And here you have the last touch of irony: that criticism is as inevitable a piece of self-expression as the work criticised. We rail at the egoism, the self-absorption, self-glorification of authors. As if critics, any more than authors, could get outside themselves! But criticism, it seems, there must be? Then let it

play the game fairly. Let the critic, as far as he can, make the self-revelation frank and complete. He cannot, any more than the author, tell us all about his inner harmony, his inmost secret self upon which his judgments are based; but he can at least give us a clue to it. The necessity for that constitutes the real condemnation of anonymous criticism. Anonymous criticism is a meaningless thing, a hieroglyph of which the key is withheld. Protests against it are generally raised in the interests of authors. But I would protest in the interests of criticism itself. It is a futility, as I say, so far as the works criticised are concerned. "Things are what they are and their consequences are what they will be." But that is no reason why we should make it futile as an end in itself.

St. Augustine

His "Confessions."—Even as the devout are accustomed to say, very justly, that there is no reason why the devil should have all the best tunes, so am I minded to say—I trust without impropriety—that there is no reason why the theologians should have all the best books. No doubt the main virtue of the "Confessions" of St. Augustine is one of spiritual edification. But they have a purely literary virtue, too, and a psychological virtue. They are a lifelike and candid picture of a man. They are a minute and curious study in self-analysis and self-revelation—a "document humain," as the cant phrase goes. Whatever may be said against egoism, the fascination of autobiography is not to be denied. No doubt "the Ego," as Pascal declared, "is hateful"; but Pascal had also to admit the pleasure experienced when, looking for an author in a book, you "find a man" there. So long as the man keeps in touch with other men, enables us to see ourselves in him, we read him with delight. The permanent popularity of St. Augustine's "Confessions"

is the best evidence of this. According to Gibbon, when the city of Hippo, Augustine's bishopric, "was burnt by the Vandals, the library was fortunately saved, which contained his voluminous writings; two hundred and thirty-two separate books or treatises on theological subjects, besides a complete exposition of the psalter and the gospel, and a copious magazine of epistles and homilies." Of these voluminous writings the world at large now reads but one—and that one the "Confessions." The fact is significant. A man is never so interesting to other men as when he talks—sincerely—about himself. Some men seem born to talk in that way—a Montaigne, a Pepys, a Rousseau. They are of the tribe of the self-revealers; "'fessing" is as natural to them as to Topsy. St. Augustine was the first of this tribe. You feel that he had an itching "to tell somebody." How could a man of this temper—so copious a writer as Gibbon's list shows him to have been, and a Professor of Rhetoric to boot—*not* have written his "Confessions"?

That he 'fessed from a nobler motive than the mere satisfaction of his own tendency to make confidences we have already admitted. He wrote of himself to warn and to encourage and to convert, to teach his fellow-men how they could "rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." Montaigne wrote of himself out of scientific curiosity, Pepys out of sheer incontinence of speech, and Rousseau out of morbid vanity. Nevertheless, St. Augustine was of their family—the one saint who has adorned it, given it the quality

in which it has, as a rule, been too sadly to seek, the quality of holiness. And yet the Saint, it must be avowed, is sometimes a little chilling, almost inhuman. For instance, he begins by offering us a pleasing glimpse of his infancy—how he "began to smile, at first in sleep, then awake. For this I have been told, and believe, since I see other babies do the same. But I do not recollect how it was with myself. And behold, gradually I came to know where I was, and I tried to express my wants to those who could gratify them, yet could not." And so on. Then, almost in the same breath, he deplores the "grave faults" of babes and sucklings. "The innocence of infancy depends on the weakness of its limbs, not on its character. I know, because I have seen jealousy in a babe. It could not speak, yet it eyed its twin brother with pale cheeks and look of hate. This is common knowledge." Only saints can venture to write of babes in that strain; in other men we should find it intolerable. Again, as a schoolboy Augustine robbed orchards. "There was a pear tree just beyond our vineyard, laden with fruit, but the pears were not tempting either to the eye or to the taste. Till midnight we had been rioting, according to our pestilential habit, about the open spaces of the town, and then we marched off, a band of profligates, to shake and strip the tree. We carried off huge loads, not to feast upon, but to throw to the hogs, though perhaps we ate a few. And this we did merely for the pleasure of doing wrong." What a delightful touch is that—"though perhaps we

ate a few"! The whole adventure reads like some exploit of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. And for an adventure like that, such phrases as "pestilential habit," "band of profligates," strike one as a little excessive.

It is upon the frankly human side of St. Augustine that one prefers to dwell. Like all healthy boys, he hated Greek. "Why, then, did I hate my Greek literature? For Homer weaves fables with a skilful hand, nor is any vanity so delightful as his. Yet he was distasteful to me as a boy, and so I think would Virgil be to Greek boys if they were compelled to learn him in the same way, that is to say, by dint of drudgery. The drudgery of acquiring a foreign tongue turned all the sweetness of the Grecian myths into gall." At a later stage he sowed his wild oats in a way of which the mere thought drove him, after his conversion, to cries of anguish and self-loathing. We formally approve the anguish, we are bound to approve it—but with what delight we fall upon such a revelation as this, which brings the youth of 370 A.D. into touch with the most "modern" of amorists: "I was not yet in love, but *I loved the idea of love*. . . . To love and to be loved was sweet to me." And throughout there is a constant note of "modernity" in the Saint. He has a digression on tragedy which reads like a chapter of Rousseau's letter to D'Alembert against stage-plays. He fed, like M. Maeterlinck, upon the "Enneads" of Plotinus. He speaks of his mother, "the chaste widow" Monica, and of the

pain he gave her in his wild youth, just as Pendennis speaks of Helen. And how beautifully he describes the ecstasy of youthful friendship! "It was the talk, the laughter, the courteous mutual deference, the common study of the masters of eloquence, the comradeship now grave now gay, the differences that left no sting, as of a man differing with himself, the spice of disagreement which seasoned the monotony of consent." You seem to be reading a paraphrase of Matthew Arnold's :—

> And yet what days were those, Parmenides,
> When we were young, when we could number friends
> In all the Italian cities like ourselves!

These things, and such things as these, give the "Confessions" their peculiar charm. Here is a Book of Devotion which is also a fascinating piece of literature —"ce qui ne gâte rien," as M. Sarcey used to say.

A Sleek Aphorist

Joubert.—It is the fashion to deplore our poverty in the literature of aphorism. We are bidden to envy the French with their troops of *pensée* writers. Where is our La Rochefoucauld, our Vauvenargues, our Joubert? The best way of dealing with the "littery gents" who make this complaint is to get them to read an aphorist, as Mr. Boffin's friend confessed he had *not* read Gibbon, "slap through." Let them take, for instance, the popular edition of Joubert. There are four hundred pages, with an average, say, of half a dozen *pensées* to a page—two thousand four hundred detached "thoughts." I fancy that will choke them off. I can speak for myself. The aphoristic is the most irritating form of literature. It is, of necessity, pretentious, for its very form requires it to be dogmatic, oracular, to give itself the inspired air of the writing on the wall. Like Charles Lamb's Scotchman, the aphorist does not find, he brings. And he seldom escapes the pitfall of cheap antithesis. Take two pairs of obvious opposites, *e.g.* "weakness" and

"strength," "body" and "mind." The permutations of these four words will give you as many aphorisms as you please. For instance, physical weakness often accompanies mental vigour—you had noticed that almost before you left the nursery. Accordingly you boldly write: "There is a feebleness of body which comes from strength of mind." You add, quite mechanically, "and a feebleness of mind which comes from strength of body." And, lo! you have produced a *pensée* of Joubert. Or suppose you are considering clearness of thought. Clearness suggests the opposite, and you say, "There are lees to every mind"—Joubert again! Or you have observed the not very recondite fact that lovers are apt to betray their secret. "Les amours secrets se trahissent." But that is a little meagre, so to round off your phrase you think of something else which betrays itself. Ah! you have it—"hidden perfume." And now you have your complete *pensée:* "Les parfums cachés et les amours secrets se trahissent"—Joubert once more! In this way one could produce a handy pocket guide: "Aphorisms while you wait; or, Every man his own Joubert."

I exaggerate. You will only become in that way a sham Joubert. If the real Joubert had a few machine-made thoughts, he grew a far greater number. But they are a somewhat sickly, hot-house growth. It is characteristic of him to use the word "delicacy" until you positively loathe it, and could welcome a party of beanfeasters with a concertina. Boswell once bragged of his "delicacy." "You must not parade your delicacy

too much," said Johnson, "or you will be a *tête-à-tête* man all your life." That was precisely Joubert's case. He paraded his delicacy too much, and he *was* a *tête-à-tête* man all his life. He was not to blame for that, as Boswell would have been to blame. He was a life-long invalid. He used to quote the saying of one of his friends, Madame de Châtenay, that his soul had met his body by chance, and made what it could of a bad business. One must not be surprised to find his thoughts always tending towards the valetudinarian, not to say the namby-pamby. He sounds the praises of the negative, the passive virtues; temperance, soberness, and chastity. This makes, of course, for edification. But "Dieu! que la chasteté produit d'admirables amours!" is a little "steep." And "Eyes raised towards heaven are always fine eyes" may have a sort of "keepsake" prettiness, but is really not common sense. Nor do I greatly care for a man who thinks it needful to analyse modesty in six pages. For me, as has been said of St. Augustine, "le saint gâte l'homme."

To a writer of this temperament one would scarcely go for piquant reflections on marriage and the eternal feminine and the duel of sex—matters about which aphorists in general, from La Rouchefoucauld to Schopenhauer, have been vastly entertaining. Joubert thought "tenderness" was "passion in repose"—the belief of a man, I should guess, who was more acquainted with tenderness than with passion. "The chastisement of those who have loved women too much is to be for ever loving

them." I should like to hear Don Juan's observations upon that. But here is the aphorism which shows you the true inwardness of Joubert in this matter. "The four loves corresponding to the four ages of a well-ordered human life are the love of everything, the love of women, the love of order, and the love of God. There are, however, privileged souls who, giving themselves up, from their youth, and almost from their infancy, to the love of order and the love of God, forbid themselves the love of women, and spend a long life in loving naught but innocence." Joubert was one of these privileged souls. The aphorist was no amorist. One admires his long life, so blamelessly spent, but . . . but . . . well, it makes his *pensées* rather mawkish.

Sainte-Beuve, whose praise of Joubert has more knowledge and more discretion than Matthew Arnold's, hinted that the moralist occasionally bored him. But what else but boredom could result from his famous ambition "to put a whole book into a page, a whole page into a sentence, and this sentence into a word"? He shoots compressed pellets of thought out of a popgun—and they hurt. One longs to see the man's *whole* mind, his misgivings as well as his certitudes, to commune with him on his "off" days, to have a glimpse of a warm, fallible, human being behind the oracle—and one longs in vain. "The best thoughts," he says, "of certain writers do not seem to me to have occupied more room in their minds than they take up on their paper. I see in their ideas only luminous points in the centre, with

obscurity all round." This I take to be an unconscious piece of self-revelation. You seek for the man Joubert, who lived at a certain time in a certain house, frequented certain streets, had certain joys and sorrows, a certain tilt of the nose; you find only a series of "luminous points," a diagram of abstract wisdom. After much searching I have lighted on one really fresh, individual, live impression. It is an impression of rain. "There is a certain obscurity, during rain, which lengthens everything. It causes, too, by the disposition of body it forces on us, a sort of concentration which increases one's spiritual sensibility. The noise of it, continually occupying the ear, awakes the attention and holds it breathless. The silence and solitude which it spreads round the wayfarer, by compelling animals and men to be silent and to seek shelter, end by making his sensations more distinct. Wrapped in his cloak, with his head covered, and passing along deserted tracks, he is struck by everything, and everything grows before his imagination or his sight. The brooks are swollen, the grass thickens, the minerals show more clearly; the sky is nearer the earth, and all objects, shut within a narrower horizon, seem to take up more room and to be more important." There you have Joubert for a moment freed from his "cursed ambition" to condense a whole book into a single word—Joubert the "impressionist." But that neologism is enough to make him turn in his grave.

Samuel Johnson

On Poets.—There is a notion abroad that the poet is a law unto himself and not as other men. He represents to the average Philistine what the "medicine-man" is to the savage: an irresponsible god- (we moderns call it dæmon-) possessed being, with his eye in a fine frenzy rolling and his hair as long as Mélisande's. Tennyson's cloak, sombrero, and churchwarden pipe have begotten much dismal eccentricity. "Pushful" reporters "interview" the latest bard, and expatiate on his fur coat, or his choice of necktie, as though these things, or the wearer of them, mattered. That poetry is a form of literary composition "like another," as the French say, and that for all the practical purposes of life a poet is of the same clay as a county councillor—these are truths which, obvious though they are, it requires no little courage to express. The seriousness with which we take our poets would have provoked very strong language from Johnson. There was nothing he detested so heartily as the cant of extravagant adulation.

According to Sir Walter Scott, a gentleman named Pot was mentioned to the sage as admiring his "Irene," beyond all tragedies of the time. "If Pot says so," was Johnson's comment, "Pot lies." One would give something to hear Johnson discoursing in Elysium on the innumerable Pots of the present day. For him, at any rate, poetry was no esoteric mystery; it was all in the day's work, and he went at it—occasionally "for" it—with plain common sense, a clear if a narrow vision, and a dogged determination not to accept counters for coin. The result is that, with all its defects of taste, its bull-in-a-china-shop vagaries, and its occasional lapses into sheer philistinism, there is no more stimulating book in the language than "The Lives of the Poets." No doubt it was not exactly as a tonic that Johnson thought of his work. He hoped it was "written in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety." But *habent sua fata libelli*, and it is not Johnson's fault that the "Lives" contribute less to our piety than to our pleasure. Macaulay went so far as to say that they were "as entertaining as any novel." But Macaulay, like Habbakuk in the Voltairean anecdote, was *capable de tout*. For "pleesure and deevilment" I fancy the lives of the Three Musketeers, and other Gentlemen of France, are better than those of Richard Savage and Abraham Cowley and Namby-Pamby Philips.

Each of the more important "Lives" splits up into two parts, a part of narrative and a part of critical

exegesis; and by general consent the first is far superior to the second. The reason is not far to seek. Johnson's experience of life, his native shrewdness, his sturdiness of character, made him an admirable judge of men's actions. He was a born moralist. But a born critic he was not, nor anything like it. He lacked the primary requisites of the critical temperament—pliability, ready sympathy, responsiveness to the mood and the mind criticised. Nothing could be more apt than Boswell's remark that in drawing Dryden's character Johnson delineated much of his own. "The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented he studied rather than felt; and produced sentiments not such as Nature enforces but meditation supplies." It is this quick sensibility which differentiates the new from the old criticism; if it makes a gap between Johnson and Matthew Arnold or Sainte-Beuve, it makes a yawning gulf between Johnson and Walter Pater or Anatole France. Even in his own day, as Boswell is compelled—grudgingly—to record, Johnson's critical deficiencies were too patent to be ignored. "By some violent Whigs he was arraigned of injustice to Milton; by some Cambridge men of depreciating Gray; and his expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, gave offence to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs. Montagu, the

ingenious essayist on Shakespeare, between whom and his lordship a commerce of reciprocal compliments had long been carried on." About what Johnson really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, we need not greatly care, but his "Gray" is certainly one of his most melancholy performances, while there are passages in the "Milton" which Flaubert would call "gigantesque" in their ineptitude. "To select a singular event and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty; for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that 'The Bard' promotes any truth, moral or political." Such is Johnson's singular criticism of Gray's "Bard," to which it was about as relevant as to the Binomial Theorem or the South Sea Bubble. As for his analysis of "Lycidas," it is one of the famous "howlers" of criticism. Jeffrey on Wordsworth was not more hopelessly at fault. "It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion, for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and the ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of 'rough satyrs' and 'fauns with cloven heel.' When there is leisure for fiction, there is little grief. . . . Surely no man could have fancied that he read 'Lycidas' with pleasure had he not known its author." This passage positively

bristles with blunders as Drury Lane (in the advertisements) with exits. It not only condemns all elegiac poetry, but all poetry and all art of any kind. When there is no leisure for fiction, there can be no art. If passion runs not after remote allusions, neither does it run after such artifices as clear syntax, metre, and rhyme. The natural language of grief is not poetry at all, but "Ah" and "Oh" and "Boo-oo." But the task of refuting Johnson's heresies is too easy. The judicious will rather cherish them as rounding off a vigorous personality. They will not go to Johnson for critical light and leading, but for ripe knowledge of men and things, for a rich intellectual vitality, and, above all, for a style which, despite all that has been said against it, is perhaps a better model of English than a Key-Note novel or a piece of Hill Top-ography. Whether we like his language or not, it always meant something, which is by no means the case with some of our modern prose. It was a marvel of conciseness. It had a fine monumental stateliness. "Sir," he said of some rival biographers, "the dogs don't know how to write trifles with dignity." He, at any rate, was a dog who did.

Among Ladies.—The subtle forces which attract a man, and make him attractive, to this or that particular lady, whether in the way of friendship or of a more tender sentiment, would require a greater than Newton to discover. All that can be stated about

them with certainty is that they do not vary directly with the mass, or inversely as the square of the distance, of the parties concerned. And so it is useless to inquire why it was that all women (except Mrs. Boswell and Mrs. Montagu) and girls liked the Doctor, and why the Doctor, in the language of the Minerva Press, "reciprocated their affection." Whatever the reason, this fact of the mutual attraction of elderly gentlemen and pretty young ladies is a very common one. Mr. Samuel Pickwick's is a case in point. He was surrounded by rosy-cheeked and (as was the passing fashion of the hour) giggling damsels, who all with one accord declared him "a perfect old dear." The lady with the fur-topped boots and her friends gave him no peace when there was any mistletoe about, and would even take a sip of his somewhat too frequent potations. Now, it is not recorded that they ever honoured Mr. Wardle or Mr. Tracy Tupman with these marks of their esteem. Kissing goes by favour, even when it is the mere symbol of mutual respect between artless maidens and elderly gentlemen. Among modern examples, Ernest Renan may be cited as one whose decline into the sere and yellow leaf was soothed by the innocent admiration of the gentler sex. His exchange of views on the eternal verities with Mlle. Victorine Demay, of the Alcazar Music Hall, is now "legendary," and will remind Landorians of the dialogue between Epicurus, Leontion, and Ternissa. By his own admission M. Renan preferred ladies young and

comely, and was wont to find Divine authority for this preference in the words of a mediæval hymn :—

> Pulchras vult virgunculas
> Turpes pellit feminas.

That was very much Sam Johnson's way. He, too, liked them *pulchras*, calling them "dearest" and "dunce" and "little fool"; but when they were *turpes* he was apt to be grumpy. They rewarded him in kind. In Skye, "one of our married ladies, a lively, pretty little woman, good-humouredly sat down upon Dr. Johnson's knee, and being encouraged by some of the company, put her hands round his neck and kissed him." "Do it again," said the Doctor, "and let us see who will tire first." The lady of Corrichatachin declared herself in love with him, whereupon he seized her hand eagerly and kissed it. Pretty well, this, for an amorist of sixty-five! A young lady, enamoured, declares him "a very seducing man." In a strictly Pickwickian sense, then, the Doctor was pre-eminently a man of *bonnes fortunes*. One diverting consequence of this success with the ladies was that he set himself up as an authority upon their costume. Like all men of sense and spirit, he was a theorist upon dress, whatever his practice may have been. "Sir," he said to Boswell, "I once had a very rich laced waistcoat, which I wore the first night of my tragedy"—as Colonel Newcome used to speak with pride of his "one good coat." One of the Doctor's principles was an

objection to Brussels point. "A Brussels trimming is like bread sauce," said he; "it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing instead of it." Miss Burney's cap came in for praise. "I have looked at it some time, and I like it much. It has not that vile bandeau across it, which I have so often cursed." Old Mrs. Burney was bluntly told that she should not wear a black hat and cloak in summer, and to Mrs. Thrale, appearing before him in a dark gown, he shouted, "You little creatures should never wear those sort of clothes; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?" Not satisfied with regulating the dress of the fair, the Doctor gave them instruction on deportment, though his method lacked the suavity of Mr. Turveydrop. "Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in," is distinctly fierce. A young lady was not to make eyes in church, where "her eyes should be her own, her ears the preacher's." From gentlemen she "should not object to hearing the same joke over again"—invaluable counsel! When a damsel's suitor has been accepted by papa and mamma, she may go so far as to own herself "obliged to him for his good opinion," but no farther. On elderly coquettes the Doctor was very severe: "They hide from themselves the advances of age, and endeavour to supply the sprightliness and bloom of youth by artificial beauty and forced vivacity. They hope to inflame the heart by

charms which have lost their fire, or melt it by languor which is no longer delicate." There is, however, an off-chance that these rude remarks were written by the learned Mrs. Carter.

Johnson as Squire of Dames must not be confounded with Johnson as Serious Lover. He was a widower, as we all know, long before he came within Boswell's ken; but men of his temperament are not Don Juans in their youth, and his love affairs must have been simple and ingenuous. There was a Miss Molly Aston whom he adored from afar, and one Mrs. Emmet, an actress at Lichfield, about whom nothing is known, and Miss Hector who met the sage fifty years later and bravely told him when he had drunk enough tea. His lifelong devotion to his "Tetty" is a household word. Here was the "ideal husband" about whom controversy is perpetually raging. But "les passions de l'amour" were scarcely in Johnson's line. An attempt has been made to show that he was in love with Mrs. Thrale, and that his indignant explosion of wrath at her marriage with Piozzi was the outcome of jealousy, and even of a broken heart! This is rank nonsense. Johnson was one of the most honourable, most austerely virtuous of men. His relations with Mrs. Thrale during her first husband's lifetime had been those of father and daughter. Are we to assume that upon Thrale's death, when Johnson himself was an old man with one foot in the grave, they could suddenly have changed their character? Surely the man's atti-

tude was natural enough. He still felt himself, as it were, *in loco parentis*, and desired to prevent a marriage which, rightly or wrongly, he thought unwise and unseemly. His chagrin at losing his old accustomed corner in the Thrale household no doubt helped to bias his mind against the match. But to speak of jealousy, a lover's jealousy, in the matter is absurd. Pious Johnsonians at all events will refrain. Every aspect of Samuel Johnson's life is worth considering from every point of view. We cannot know too much of this great-hearted Englishman and truly good man, or be reminded too often of what we already know. With every reminder, we shall but love and honour him the more.

Her Ideals.—Ladies are occasionally heard to declare that they do not like Miss Austen. Ladies will say anything—especially about other ladies. But the man who is not a devoted lover of Jane deserves to be fed on Mr. Woodhouse's gruel and to be talked at by Lady Catherine de Bourgh for the rest of his unnatural life. A hostile critic has declared in print that he never wants to meet Miss Austen in Paradise. The bold, bage man! He must have said it for a wager. Many of us will retort that we don't want to go to Paradise if we are not to meet Miss Austen there. "En paradis qu'ai-je à faire? répondit Aucassin. Je ne me soucie d'y aller, pourvu que j'aie seulement Nicolette, ma douce mie, que j'aime tant." With Jane any other place, *the* other place, "were Paradise enow." But the enemy insinuates that Jane must have been a most unlovable woman. In the brave days of yore a man would have been run through the body or (as Mr. Birrell would say) hit over the costard for that outrageous assertion, and serve him

right! The gentle Jane unlovable! How could an unlovable woman create those lovable women, Emma and Anne and Elizabeth and Catherine? (One can never remember their surnames—Jane, by the way, spelt it "sirnames.") And yet there are critics who can dissemble their love for these sweet ladies, and even call Anne Elliot a poor creature. Now Anne rejected Captain Wentworth, R.N., in her early "unknowing youth," through the persuasion of her elders; in her "riper age" she accepted him on her own initiative. This means that she was a dutiful girl, who took some years to discover that love is a wiser counsellor than interfering parents and guardians. It is true that the captain had amassed £20,000 prize-money in the interval. Thus was virtue rewarded. But because a woman's constancy survives her timidity are we to call her a poor creature? No, a thousand times no (as they say in M. Georges Ohnet's novels), and I declare I wish the £20,000 had been millions, for Anne's dear sake. The enemy even attacks Emma, the peerless Emma, the Emma of our heart. "Emma, the unreformed, undisciplined Emma, is a nice, cheerful, pretty girl; but after she subsided into being Mrs. Knightly" (which his name was Knightley, Betsy), "I fear she fell away sadly into conformity with the discreet and dull ideals of her creator." This, "I fear," is dastardly. Unable to pick holes in the lady as he knows her, and we all know her, the *advocatus diaboli* is driven to hint that she "fell away" in the condition in which he

doesn't know her and nobody knows her. It is exactly the insinuation which the Rev. Mr. Elton would have made.

Lofty souls, soaring human boys and others, cannot forgive Jane her "ideals." Well, "ideals" is a big word, a prave 'ort, as Fluellen would say. It is current jargon nowadays — we talk of Ibsen's ideals and Wagner's and Miss Marie Corelli's—but it was not one of Miss Austen's words. Mr. Henry Tilney in the little lecture on language which he delivered to his sister and Catherine on Beechen Cliff had nothing to say about the word "ideals." But since it appears we must talk of Jane's ideals, let us not brand them as "dull" because they were "discreet." What were Jane's ideals? Truth, I should say, sincerity, quiet scorn of affectation and humbug, a home-keeping modesty, tender sympathy, maidenly reticence, and cheery good-humour. Not a bad little lot, I submit. They are some of the ideals which have moved a Frenchman to write a book with the flattering title, "A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons." Jane and her creatures were all Anglo-Saxons, all True-Born Englishwomen. The depraved novel-readers, who in Jane's own day would have preferred "The Mysteries of Udolpho" and gloated over Laurentina's skeleton, now desiderate a warmer blood, the Celtic strain perhaps, madcap Irish Dianas of the Crossways and Scotch Lady Babbies. But to others of us these explosive, ebullient, flamboyant heroines seem "gey ill to live wi'," whereas Miss Austen's girls are all

pre-eminently comfortable companions. Jane was a comfortable writer. She soothes. She is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. In an age of "sensational" head-lines, kinematographs, motor-cars, and boomsters, we could do with a gentle Jane or two.

> *Austen*, thou should'st be living at this hour!
> England hath need of thee.

But she would never consent to appear at the Women Writers' Dinner.

Let it be granted that her very young men are failures, that Henry Tilney was a prig of the first water, Wickham and Willoughby scamps of the most wooden convention, and Darcy much more objectionable than his creator suspected. But the truth is, very young men are unfit for fiction. It is a question whether they are fit to live—otherwise than concealed under a barrel, as Professor Teufelsdröckh recommended. Miss Austen had to learn her craft, like other authors, at the expense of her readers, and it took her some time to find out that young men make bad "copy." In her later books the ages went up—it is the inevitable tendency of authors to prolong what M. Bourget calls "l'âge de l'amour," as they advance in years themselves—and the men improve vastly in the process. Compare Mr. Knightley with Darcy, Captain Wentworth with Edward Ferrars or Henry Tilney. But throughout her work her elderly men are capitally done—Mr. Bennet, Mr. Woodhouse, Sir Walter Elliot, Admiral Croft. This is

accounted for, no doubt, by the fact that spinsters who write novels have the best chance of observing the foibles of the other sex in their papas and uncles.

As to Jane's vocabulary and style, one is weary of being told that they are superannuated. It is true that the word "elegance," in the sense in which she employed it, has migrated to the United States—whither the best of our old words and old books and old furniture all go. And I doubt if "elegance" was daily current in Jane's time. It was a pet of the previous century; Jane used it with a certain consciousness of old-fashioned formality, putting it for choice into the mouth of pompous respectability. It is the Rev. Mr. Collins who talks of "elegant females." (And, by the same token, "female" has nearly vanished.) The truth is, I fancy, that Jane very largely invented her own vocabulary, as the White Knight invented his own helmet. There is no vocabulary at all like it among contemporary novels—not Peacock's, not Miss Edgeworth's, not Sir Walter's. Jane was inclined to "throw back" to Johnson, for whom, as we know, she entertained an almost Pinkertonian veneration. Mark her Johnsonian use of "punctually." Among her peculiar idioms, not of Johnson's begetting, you may note the use of "the chief" ("the chief of the day," "the chief of the business") and "the harp was bringing" (for "being brought"). And, I regret to add, Jane persistently uses a plural verb after singular nominatives connected by "or"—what would Miss Pinkerton have

said to that? But the root of the matter was in her, she had the sense of words as living things. For proof of this, you cannot do better than take that little disquisition of Henry Tilney at Beechen Cliff on the decline and fall of the word "nice":—"I am sure," cried Catherine, "I did not mean to say anything wrong; but it *is* a nice book, and why should not I call it so?" "Very true," said Henry; "and this is a very nice day; and we are taking a very nice walk; and you are two very nice young ladies. Oh! it is a very nice word, indeed! it does for everything. Originally, perhaps, it was applied only to express neatness, propriety, delicacy, or refinement; people were nice in their dress, in their sentiments, or their choice. But now every commendation on every subject is comprised in that one word."

Assuredly, people who do not love Jane, her heroines, her ideals, her vocabulary, her irony, her little pedantries, and everything that is hers, had better *not* meet her in Paradise. For depend upon it, she still keeps her shrewd, observant eyes wide open there, and I trust it is not profane to assume that she has retained her habit of quiet sarcasm.

George Eliot

An Apology.—According to Johnson, it was charged against Kit Smart "that he did not love clean linen—and I," added the Sage, "have no passion for it." This is a capital instance of what is, perhaps, the rarest kind of courage, the courage of confessing to unorthodoxy in taste. Who among us nowadays dare confess that they have no passion for Wagner's music, the pictures of Puvis de Chavannes, cricket matches, or anecdotes about the Bench and the Bar? Yet I have a firm conviction that there are many respectable citizens at this moment occupying the garden seats of omnibuses who would in the Palace of Truth have to make some such confession. It is, perhaps, even more "temerarious" openly to like what is out of the fashion than to dislike what is in it. This is especially true of our likes and dislikes in literature. Books that have lost the freshness of novelty and have not yet acquired the prestige of antiquity—"old-fashioned" books, which we have grown out of and not yet grown into again—are held to be the abomination of

desolation. It is then with a deep sense of iniquity that one confesses to cherishing at this time of day a profound love and admiration for the novels of George Eliot. I am moved to this shameless avowal by the sight of three neat little pocket volumes in plain cloth, priced at a shilling apiece, which lie upon my table—"Amos Barton," "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," and "Janet's Repentance." I know all that can be said and has been said against the author of these stories. One has heard all about George Eliot's "pre-scientific" and "scientific" period. I am aware that there is no "composition" in "The Mill on the Floss," that "Romola" is overweighted with erudition and overlaid with local colour, that in "Middlemarch" you cannot see the wood for the trees, and that "Theophrastus Such" was the last infirmity of a noble mind. But, though I know all this, I don't much care. I believe that the earlier works of George Eliot—I am willing to throw one or two of the later ones to the wolves—can give points and a beating to the most belauded productions of any of our younger novelists. They compel the reflection that, despite all the circumjacent horrors of repp curtains, horsehair sofas, crinolines, cut-glass "lustres," antimacassars, and Frith pictures, it was good to be an Early Victorian. These "Scenes of Clerical Life" were published forty years ago. Carlyle was in his prime then. Tennyson and Browning and Macaulay and Disraeli and Charles Kingsley and Thackeray and Dickens and Trollope were hard at work, Charlotte Brontë was not long dead.

To-day you have—what? A host of minor poets and minor novelists and minor everything, with a huge output of clever or cleverish work. It is very literally a case of *aurea mediocritas*, for many of these small fry of literature make thousands of pounds where the Early Victorian whales made hundreds. There is no need to speak of the vast sums made outside literature by certain well-advertised lady novelists of this our time—for it would be wicked to mention these notorious persons in the same breath with the name of George Eliot.

One characteristic of the literary generation to which we can look back is its patience. It was not a generation, like our own, in a hurry. George Eliot was close on forty when she published these "Scenes of Clerical Life." And yet there is something of the immaturity of youth in the style of them. It is an exuberant style, for, curiously enough, George Eliot began by writing the "Asiatic" prose which Matthew Arnold, rightly or wrongly, attributed to the "young lions" of a morning paper, whose lions have now grown old and comparatively tame. Every noun has its adjective, and every verb its adverb. "The husbands usually chose the distinctive dignity of a stall under one of the twelve apostles, where, when the alternation of prayers and responses had given place to the agreeable monotony of the sermon, Paterfamilias might be seen or heard sinking into a pleasant doze, from which he infallibly woke up at the sound of the concluding doxology." There is an idea

(not yet exploded in many quarters) that small details become humorous when narrated in solemn Latinisms. "The nutriment of goslings rather transcending Tommy's observations in natural history, he feigned to understand this question in an exclamatory rather than an interrogatory sense, and became absorbed in winding up his top." A pipe and gin-and-water become "the pleasing antithesis of dryness and moisture." This sort of thing was a besetting sin of George Eliot's to the end of her days. Her prose always smelt of the lamp. But from the very first you may detect her characteristic virtues as well as her defects. Here is an early specimen of her aphoristic vein: "To the man whose mouth is watering for a peach, it is of no use to offer the largest vegetable marrow." And those little touches of ironic description which are so distinctive a "note" of hers are met with on every page. "'Well, that theer's whut I call a pictur',' said old 'Mester' Ford, a true Staffordshire patriarch, who leaned on a stick and held his head very much on one side, *with the air of a man who had little hope of the present generation, but would, at all events, give it the benefit of his criticism.* 'Th' young men noo-a-deys, the're poor, squashy things —the' looke well anoof, but the' woon't wear, the' woon't wear.'" Again: "Janet had scarcely reached the end of her circumstantial narrative how the attack came on and what were her aunt's sensations—a narrative to which Mrs. Patten, in her neatly-plaited night-cap, *seemed to listen with a contemptuous resigna-*

tion to her niece's historical inaccuracy, contenting herself with occasionally confounding Janet by a shake of the head."

But no one, I imagine, reads George Eliot for the style. The virtue, the charm of her work—particularly of this early work of hers—is to be found in its all-embracing sympathy. In portraying humble lives and commonplace minds, she rarely failed to bring out what was human and lovable in them. She never affected that superiority of the artist to his personages which you will find, for instance, in the great realists who were her contemporaries on the other side of the Channel. The Rev. Amos Barton, and Mrs. Hackit, the farmer's wife, and Mr. Bates, the gardener, and the "beery," half-educated people who frequent the bar of the Red Lion at Milby, are all narrow-minded, ungainly provincial types, but they are all handled tenderly. When a Flaubert deals with commonplace minds—Homais and Bouvard and Pécuchet—you can read contempt and loathing in every line. In one of her later novels George Eliot speaks of that loving observation which pleases us in paintings of the Dutch school. The platitude and vulgarity of the subjects, the wrinkled, ugly faces of old women, a heap of common household utensils, kitchen jollity, are made beautiful and distinguished for us because they were painted with sympathy. So it was with George Eliot's stories of very ordinary, quite unheroic country curates and farmers and petty tradesmen. If Mr. Barton's grammar was shaky and his deportment

by no means Grandisonian, if Mr. Gilfil was fond of gin-and-water and a little stingy, we are persuaded to like them none the less. After describing the squalor and vice of a little manufacturing town, George Eliot adds: "Looking closer, you found some purity, gentleness, and unselfishness, as you may have observed a scented geranium giving forth its wholesome odours amidst blasphemy and gin in a noisy pot-house." That was George Eliot's own way with life; she was always "looking closer" into it, till she had revealed the soul of goodness in things evil.

Vinum Daemonum.—When they celebrated the centenary of Balzac's birth at Tours, the town council declined to contribute to the expenses, forgetting that Tours would not exist for many of us had it not been the residence of the Abbé Birotteau and Mlle. Gamard. So the devout Balzacian only knows Douai as the town of Balthazar Claes; Limoges, of Mme. Graslin; Angoulême, of Lucien de Rubempré; Sancerre, of Mme. de la Baudraye. There ought to be a map of Balzac's France, like that we have of Mr. Hardy's Wessex. Further, there should be a topographical dictionary of Balzac, who, to get his local details correct, wrote to a friend to know "the name of the street leading to the Place du Mûrier, then the name of the street which runs alongside the Place du Mûrier and the Palais de Justice, then the name of the gate opposite the cathedral, then the name of the by-street leading to the Minage, near the Rampart." An exhaustive bibliography we already possess, a monument not only to Balzac but to

the untiring devotion of that learned Belgian, M. Spoelberch de Lovenjoul; also we have a biographical dictionary of Balzac's characters (two thousand and more), compiled by MM. Cerfberr and Christophe. My copy of this work has been covered on every page with annotations and additions by an unknown hand—revealing an intimate acquaintance with every edition, every line, and every *erratum* in the "Comédie Humaine." This is significant. To the true Balzacian this great man is more than a great man: he is a demigod. And, like other religions, this one has its excess in mania. M. Anatole France once met a man who had been driven mad by Balzac worship. "Balzac," he raved, "is the Lucifer of literature. He has imagined a whole infernal world, which we are realising to-day. It is upon his lines that we are jealous, miserly, violent, and that we are rushing pell-mell, with a homicidal and ridiculous fury, to the assault of riches and honours. Balzac is the Prince of Darkness, and his reign is come. Accursed be Balzac!" Rodin has made a statue of Balzac which has divided the continent of Europe into two artistic camps.

Perhaps the true statue of Balzac would be a colossal brazen image with feet of clay. And they should be big feet, unmistakable "beetle-crushers." For his faults are apt to hover on the outer edge of the unpardonable. He had no taste, no restraint, no sense of proportion. He compels you to wallow in all-night orgies, to hold your nose over greasy kitchen odours, to hobnob with

riffraff. His "young men in a hurry"—the Rubemprés, the Rastignacs—have vulgar souls. His great ladies are decidedly "off colour." His worship of the Golden Calf is terribly overdone. The love of money and the love of intrigue are his two great *motifs*. Then the tediousness of Balzac's descriptions! He catalogues the contents of a house for you, as though you were going to take it for the season, and required an inventory of the fixtures and furniture. His landscapes are as garish as an Academy picture on the line, without one touch of true poetry, of sincere feeling for nature.

He is at his worst when he reflects and philosophises. "Mamma, what shall I think about?" asked the small girl; and the answer was, "My dear, don't think." It would have been good advice to Balzac. His murky theories on history and art and government remind one of a servant-girl's "Book of Dreams." He explains the simple by the miraculous, and illuminates the plain facts of life by "red fire from the wings." In short, he is of the intellectual type of Flaubert's Deslauriers, in "L'Éducation Sentimentale":—"Never having seen the world save through his own cravings, he imagined it as an artificial creation, working by mathematical laws. A dinner-party, a chance meeting with some one in power, a pretty woman's smile might, by a series of actions depending one on the other, have gigantic results. He believed in courtesans giving advice to diplomatists, in rich marriages brought about by intrigues, in the genius of convicts, and in the docility of chance under the hand

of strong men." Flaubert must have been thinking of Balzac when he wrote this. Daudet's judgment you may find in "Notes sur la Vie"—"Balzac describes a world he has never seen with the imagination of a dazzled provincial." And yet old-fashioned people still talk of Balzac as a "realist." How could a man be an observer of natural life who wrote all night on strong coffee, and slept all day?

The truth is, Balzac was neither a thinker nor an observer; he was a dreamer of dreams, evolving a whole world from his inner consciousness. And his dreams were his only realities. You remember what he said to Jules Sandeau, who had been telling him of an invalid sister? "Let us get back to reality. Who is going to marry Eugénie Grandet?" Also he was a megalomaniac. His big people are monsters, and his little people more than life-size. He represents life as something extraordinary, weirdly mysterious, an opium-eater's vision. To go out into the open air after reading one of his books is to get a shock of surprise, so unlike the matter-of-fact, cool, obvious, simplicity of the real world is his fevered picture of it. "People don't do these things," you find. And you could no more run against Goriot or the Princesse de Cadignan in the street than you could against Mr. Pickwick or Sam Weller. For Balzac's serious, like Dickens's comic, characters are conceived *a priori*—personified passions as the others are personified "humours."

Nevertheless, all the hedonists of the reading world

must have joined in spirit in the celebration of Balzac's centenary. For he ministers to the universal craving for intoxicants. We do not go to Balzac to learn truths about life, to seek peace and solace for the soul, to have the sympathies quickened or the character braced up; we simply go to him to get, as the vulgar say, "blind." The eighteenth-century sign, "Here a man may get drunk for a penny, and dead-drunk for twopence," might be copied for any one of the little green-covered volumes of Balzac: "Here a man may get gloriously drunk for a franc." You pay your money, and forthwith the world begins to turn round and the light to flicker strangely as in a kinematograph. Your neighbour at table, that shabby little old man, proves to be the father of elegant and wicked countesses; the practical joker on your right is a "bandit," a cold-blooded murderer and Chief of the Thirteen; while the sour-visaged old maid over there is a police spy. Or you meet the coach in a sleepy country town; a young dandy jumps out—it is the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse in disguise, come to carry you off to Paris and ruin you in company with the great De Marsay. One day, with Rastignac, you are pawning your shirt; on the next Delphine de Nucingen has lapped you in luxury. You follow Rubempré into actresses' *loges*, and get turned away from editors' dens by soldiers of Napoleon *en retraite*. From a queer old dealer in a dim and dirty *bric-à-brac* shop you get a piece of shagreen skin, which promptly transports you to a banquet where dancing women are

concealed under the table flowers. The skin shrinks and you feel your life ebbing away, until your one desire is to have no desires. Men's faces around you grin like pantomime masks with terrible passions, the avarice of Grandet and the lust of Hulot. And every one is fighting, intriguing, lying, for riches or a title or power, in this strange, terrible, fascinating Inferno. And César Birotteau asks you to his famous ball, and the Illustrious Gaudissart cajoles you with his bagman's "bluff," and Daniel D'Arthez whispers to you the secrets of the Princesse de Cadignan. . . . And you wake up with a headache, a Balzac headache, for Balzac's wine is potent stuff—what, according to Bacon, "one of the Fathers called Poesie, *Vinum Dæmonum*."

The Amorist.—Balzac was often represented by his contemporaries as a Don Juan. He complained bitterly of the calumny. That many women (though not so many as a thousand and three) entered into his life is beyond doubt, and some of them seem to have flung themselves at his head—a common penalty (or reward), they say, of successful authorship. But he always vowed there was only one woman who held his heart. She was the Countess Eve de Hanska, wife of a Polish noble, Wenceslas de Hanski, who was by twenty-five years her senior. An enthusiastic reader of Balzac, the lady had written to him to express her admiration, blended with some timid criticisms, on the publication of the "Peau de Chagrin" in 1832. She signed "L'Étrangère," and

Balzac was begged to acknowledge receipt in the agony column of a Paris newspaper. He did, and then began a long correspondence of which Balzac's share is represented by the bulky volume of "Lettres à l'Étrangère." This volume terminates with the death of the lady's husband in 1842. In the spring of 1850 Balzac and Mme. Hanska were married. By the autumn Balzac was dead.

It seems there are people who do not like reading other people's love-letters. They shrink from "intruding upon privacy which should be sacred." They told us so, more in sorrow than in anger, over the Browning Correspondence. I confess to doubting the sincerity of these protestations; but if they are indeed sincere, then they are foolish. For they tend logically to prohibit all intimate biography. We should be allowed to know nothing of our fellow-creatures but their external actions; there would be a conspiracy of make-believe that people have no inner life, no soul history, just as it was once Court etiquette to make believe that the Queen of Spain had no legs. But the truth is that most healthily constituted people of full age find love-letters the most fascinating reading in the world, the most sincere, the most various, the most subtle in essence. Consider those heart-wringing Love-letters of a Portuguese Nun and then Mérimée's exquisite "Lettres à une Inconnue." What a contrast! In passing from one to the other you have boxed the compass of emotion. Balzac's love-letters are neither exquisite nor heart-wringing. They are curious and they are characteristic. There is a

tragi-comedy underlying them. And they were the prologue to a veritable tragedy.

And, first, they are curious. They are curious for their revelations of little traits and stratagems which most men and women who have loved, I fancy, will immediately retrace in their own experience—with perhaps a shock of surprise that things which they had naïvely thought peculiar to themselves should prove to be only "common form" after all. Example: "For the past week we have been having a veritable summer here. Paris is superb. Love of my life, there have been a thousand kisses confided to the air for you; a thousand thoughts of happiness among my comings and goings, *and I know not what disdain in contemplating other men.* They had not, like me, an immense love in their heart." There are people, I think, who will have no difficulty in recognising that mood. It varies largely, of course. In the gentle Anne Elliot it took the form of pity. The consciousness of love disposes her "to pity every one, as being less happy than herself" ("Persuasion," chap. xx.) When the correspondents are so eager to write that their missives "cross," Balzac begs Mme. Hanska to number her letters. That also has occurred to others in the same situation, no doubt.

The letters are curious, again, as showing a long effort to cherish love in absence, love as an idea, an image—and the torture of the effort and its inevitable break-down from time to time. Balzac's project—forced upon him by circumstances—was to devote himself to

the labour of a galley-slave, holding aloof from the world and living practically the life of an anchorite, while consoling himself with a passion of the imagination. Every day he was to pour out his heart to Mme. Hanska on paper. A paper wooing—tempered by vague hope that "something would turn up." Such cases are known to most of us. The hope in this one was gratified, but only after seventeen years, and how often during that time a merely paper wooing proved unsatisfying! So true is it that the really important thing in love is the presence of the beloved and daily communion with her, and that the one unbearable thing is her absence from sight and hearing. There is a verse of Georges de Porto-Riche which hits that truth:—

> Le seul chagrin, le vrai malheur,
> C'est le départ de l'amoureuse.
> Son voyage est la chose affreuse,
> Connaissez-vous cette douleur?

We can see how keenly Balzac felt it, too. "Nature made me for a single love. I understand nothing outside that. I have strong friendships. But friendship is no substitute for love"—and here is the point—"everyday love, hourly love, love which gives you the infinite pleasure of hearing every moment footsteps, a voice, the rustle of a dress about the house." And after admiring himself as a "Don Quixote inconnu," faithful to a romantic ideal of spiritual love, after proudly declaring that he had contributed to the glory of France in the nineteenth century, poor Balzac ruefully adds, almost in

the same breath, "Still, I will confess in your ear that I much prefer happiness to glory, and would sell all my works to be happy [he means happy in love], as I see certain idiots being happy."

Further, the letters are curious, because of the queer little comedy of intrigue disclosed by the mere variations of their form. More often than not they begin with a formal "Madame," employ the "vous," and indicate the feelings of a discreet, if tender friend. You wonder at so much discretion, until it occurs to you that there was a certain Count Wenceslas de Hanski who might be looking over his wife's shoulder. Presents pass surreptitiously between the lovers, but in the letters of this class they are always alluded to in a sort of cypher. Thus the lady's miniature is described as "mon bon ami." All of a sudden, you come across a letter starting off at fever heat—"Oh! mon ange, mon amour, ma vie, mon bonheur, ma force, mon trésor, ma bien-aimée, quelle horrible contrainte! Quelle joie de t'écrire cœur-à-cœur!" And *then* you observe that the letter is addressed not to the lady's home but to the Poste Restante.

If the letters are curious—as showing in Balzac the type of lovers in general—they are also essentially characteristic: letters which Balzac alone could have written. The superb egoism of them! Balzac says his books make up "The Thousand and One Nights" of the Occident. He is now "the Wandering Jew" of thought, now the "Peter the Great" of intellectual effort, and—nearly always—the "Napoleon" of literature. He

gives the lady a detailed account of every novel he has on the stocks, and inflicts upon her the whole arithmetic of his debts. *His* house, *his* turquoise-handled cane, *his* stomach-ache—these are the things that matter, evidently, and if an inquiry as to the lady's affairs does contrive to get itself expressed, it is of the most perfunctory nature. Naturally the great man's contemporaries come off second best. George Sand is "unamiable"; Hugo has "bourgeois ideas"; Gautier is "sure to come to grief." . . . Perhaps the most concise description of these letters of Balzac's is supplied by one of his own phrases: a combination of "fury for work and *furia d' amore.*"

"*L'Éducation Sentimentale.*"—To Flaubert realism was the probity of art. There is a mood that comes to all of us in which romance palls and mere story-telling bores. We feel that they "cook" the facts of life, that they are what the vulgar call "fake," and we yearn for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. In such a mood Flaubert is our man—the Flaubert of "L'Éducation Sentimentale" even more than the Flaubert of the far more widely known "Madame Bovary." The story of Emma Bovary is, after all, a story—a series of incidents selected and arranged and graduated and worked into a definite pattern. But "L'Éducation Sentimentale" is plotless, amorphous, or if it has any rhythm it is what Mr. Henry James somewhere calls "the strange irregular rhythm of life" itself. Thackeray talked of "a novel without a hero," but was quite incapable of writing a novel really answering to that description. Now "L'Éducation Sentimentale" has neither hero nor heroine, villain nor "walking gentleman."

It presents its people as what real people for the most part are, "half-baked," ineffectual, drifting through life, and having no adventures because they are not adventurous. The average novelist carefully leaves out the "loose ends" of life; Flaubert carefully keeps them in. He shows the world—or that corner of it which he chooses to inspect—as drab, platitudinous, barren. His people have vague aspirations, vague regrets. They accomplish nothing. Frédéric Moreau loves—so far as he can love any one—Madame Arnoux, and Madame Arnoux loves Frédéric. But nothing comes of it. They are like the lovers in Browning's poem of "The Statue and the Bust," "frustrated ghosts." They are no more capable of achieving a wrong than a right action. They are always letting I dare not wait upon I would. Theirs is a lifelong indecision; "the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin." The point is that they are absolutely real. They do not seem to come out of a book at all, but out of the next street. No detail escapes Flaubert's microscopic observation. Take a single specimen of it:—

"During these dinners he scarcely uttered a word: he kept gazing at her. She had a little mole close to her temple. Her head-bands were darker than the rest of her hair, and were always a little moist at the edges; from time to time she stroked them with only two fingers. *He knew the shape of each of her nails.* He took delight in listening to the rustle of her silk dress as she swept past doors; he stealthily inhaled the perfume

that came from her handkerchief; her comb, her gloves, her rings were for him things of special interest, important as works of art, almost endowed with life like individuals: all took possession of his heart and strengthened his love."

There is no "fake" here; it is an absolutely accurate transcript from life. Perhaps it may be thought that such a feat is within the reach of any one with eyes and a notebook; yet only Flaubert has done it.

It has been said that there is no artistic unity in "L'Éducation Sentimentale." But what is artistic unity? Tolstoy has answered that question. "The cement which binds the building of a work of art into coherence, and which therefore produces a reflection of life, is not the unity of persons nor of circumstance, but the oneness of the author's independent moral attitude to his subject." There can be no doubt about the oneness of Flaubert's moral attitude. It is an attitude of *ennui*, disillusionment, disgust. And there's the rub. For in this attitude of Flaubert you have at once the justification—the artistic justification—and the condemnation—the moral condemnation—of his work. He saw life steadily, but he saw it flat and commonplace and ugly. Whatever is generous, nobly ardent, candid, and frank in life he either ignored or could not see. And why? For the simple reason that, though he observed closely, he observed without sympathy. Contrast his realism with our best English realism—which I take to be only another way of saying

the realism of George Eliot—and you perceive at once that the difference turns on this question of sympathy. George Eliot described homely, common, even vulgar things, as the Dutchmen painted them on canvas, with unflinching truth, but always sympathetically, so that we loved them the more for knowing them the better. Flaubert inspires us with his own disgust for them. Curiously enough, Flaubert seems to have prided himself on possessing the very gift which he lacked. In one of his letters to George Sand, describing his progress with this novel, he wrote: "I confine myself to exhibiting things just as they appear to me, to expressing what I take to be the truth. So much the worse for the consequences. I don't want to have love, or hatred, or pity, or anger. As for sympathy, that is different; one never has enough of it." Assuredly Flaubert, whatever he may have thought, did not have enough of it. "L'Éducation Sentimentale" is a masterpiece of realism, but of unsympathetic realism. Hence it at once fascinates and repels.

But I have been speaking of Flaubert's novel, not of the current English version of it. The translator gives evidence on every page of ignorance, not merely of the commonest French idioms, not merely of the simplest French vocabulary, but of elementary French grammar. A young man who resolved that he "would save" ("économiserait") money is said to have "spared" it. "Rustre," which means "boor," is translated "bore." "Je dine en ville"—"I am dining out"—is

rendered "I am dining in the city." A gentleman who had eyes "à fleur de tête"—that is, prominent (or "goggle") eyes—is said to have had them "high up in his face." The translator is evidently one of that large class of students who, when a dictionary gives two meanings, promptly take the first. Thus, "Boursier means "College Exhibitioner" and also "Speculator on the Bourse." The translator makes a shot at the first meaning—unfortunately the wrong one of the two—and (by a very superfluity of naughtiness) calls it "University Prizeman." "You have the appearance of a famous member of the National Guard" ("Vous m'avez l'air d'un fameux garde national") is queer English. "Frédéric gave him ten francs, what was left of them he had got," is not English at all. "I would have done better to take my dress-coat" is Irish; so are "I will be killed," and "'Tis what I will end by doing." A dealer's commission ("pot-de-vin") is called his "drink allowance," and an "embarras," or "block" of vehicles, a "regular jumble." I am afraid the whole translation is a regular jumble. Occasionally it deviates, in footnotes, from translation to exegesis—with the most astonishing results. One specimen will suffice. The name "Pritchard" frequently occurs in the book. A street mob cries, "Down with Pritchard!" Newspaper commonplaces are said to deal with Pritchard. A dancer at a fancy ball is disguised as Pritchard. Who was this mysterious Pritchard? The translator makes a bold conjecture. "This probably refers," he says,

"to the English astronomer of that name."[1] The late Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, the most modest of men, would have been dismayed to hear that he had been thus dragged from his academic retirement. Is it possible that the translator never heard of Pritchard, the British Consul at Tahiti, whose arrest by the French in 1843 brought England and France to the very verge of war? We have still to wait for an English translation of "L'Éducation Sentimentale."

Anatole France

"*L'Orme du Mail.*"—Now that M. Anatole France is of the French Academy, it is to be conjectured that official prestige will gain him the attention of the many, though, assuredly, he will continue to write for the judgment of the few. Popularity—in the sense of appreciation by those whom our ancestors frankly called "the vulgar," and whom with bated breath and whispering humbleness our ancestors' descendants call "the great public"—he can scarcely hope for; indeed, he will probably shrink from it. For he is among the Quietists of literature—a "solitary," as they would have said in Fielding's day; a sage cloistered, sequestered, dispassionate, holding no form of creed but contemplating all; with no discernible "mission," save, perhaps, the playful dissection of the "missionary" spirit; perpetually putting the (after all very sensible and serious) question of "jesting Pilate"—"What is truth?" There is no room for the Quietists in the literary Vanity Fair—where a talent for shouting is an indispensable requisite (if not a complete outfit)—

and M. Anatole France is not to the taste of Mr. Worldly Wiseman or Mr. Facing Both Ways. If one had to label M. France in one word, one would choose that favourite word of George Herbert's—mansuetude. It is the quality of mansuetude which is the chief charm of "L'Orme du Mail." Many of the foibles of our common humanity, and many that are purely local and temporary—peculiar to a little French provincial town of to-day—are laid bare in this book, but always with a gentle humour, an irony that has no bitter flavour of contempt. Its form will probably expose many of Messrs. Mudie's subscribers to a shock of disappointment. Ostensibly a narrative of events and a picture of manners, it is in reality a vehicle of opinion. That is to say, so far as it is a novel at all, it is a critic's novel. Here, of course, M. France is following, not for the first time, the tradition of Voltaire. There is a "story" in "Candide" and "Zadig" and "L'Ingénu," and the rest of the Voltairean *contes*—and a good story, too, often enough—but it is not for the story that the wise read these works; and if any one is unwise enough to read "L'Orme du Mail" for the story, he will soon find that he is hunting the Snark. Rival priests are candidates for a vacant bishopric; there is the favourite of the local Prefect, and the favourite of the local General, and the "dark horse" of the Cardinal Archbishop; for a moment there is a promise of an intrigue, but it soon "peters out," and while we have been grasping at the shadow of a story, we find that what we have really got is the substance of

M. France's views on religion, the Republic, and the Cosmos. And if any one thinks himself defrauded by that result, I can only recommend him to keep to "The Murder of Delicia" or the collected works of Mrs. Annie S. Swan.

It is proper to all humane authors (just as they are shy of publishers) to love booksellers; it is especially proper to M. Anatole France, who is never tired of reminding us that he is a bookseller's son. And so none of his stories is complete without its bookseller's shop, which serves at once as a haunt for his personages and a *point de repère* for his ideas. In "La Reine Pédauque" we had the bookshop of M. Blaizot. In "L'Orme du Mail" we have the bookshop of M. Paillot, where M. de Terremondre, the old *beau* turned bibliophile, comes to tell scandalous anecdotes about dead and gone actresses, and to dip into the Kehl edition of Voltaire in large paper, and M. Bergeret, of the local university, has his own straw-chair, though he never dares buy a book for fear of his wife and his three daughters. In Bergeret you have a humorous-pathetic picture of the provincial university professor, buried in distasteful routine, crushed by a sordid domesticity, sighing in vain for Paris and literary honours. Off M. Paillot's straw-chair he was never happy. He was poor, huddled up with his wife and daughters in a close lodging, where he "tasted to excess the inconvenience of life in common," finding hairpins on his writing-table and his manuscripts scorched by curling-irons. "M. Bergeret was not happy. He had received no official distinction. True,

he despised honours; but he felt it would have been pleasanter to despise them as a recipient. He was obscure. To be sure, he contemned literary glory, knowing that Virgil's European reputation rested on sheer nonsense and a story of a cock-and-a-bull. But it irked him to have no communication with writers who, like MM. Faguet, Doumic, and Pellissier, had minds corresponding, he thought, to his own. He would have liked to know them, to live with them in Paris, to write like them in the reviews, to contradict them, to be on their level, perhaps to surpass them. He was conscious of a certain fineness of intelligence, and he had written pages which he knew to be agreeable." It is to M. Bergeret (who points out that Joan of Arc was a "mascotte") that M. France confides his apology *pro Republica.* The Third Republic is not "justice," but it is, at all events, "facility." All bonds are relaxed under it, which is a weakness to the State, but a relief to individuals. "It pleases and touches one by its modesty. It consents to not being admired. It only exacts a little respect, and altogether renounces esteem. It suffices it to live. That is its whole desire: a legitimate one. Like the woodcutter in the fable, like the Mantuan apothecary, who so mightily surprised that young madman of a Romeo, it is afraid of death, and of death alone. It distrusts princes and warriors. In danger of death it would turn 'nasty.' That would be a pity. But so long as its life is not attempted, and only its honour is attacked, it is good-humoured. I

find a government of this character agreeable and reassuring. After full reflection I am much attached to our institutions." This apology will perhaps be more appreciated by readers with a taste for irony than by the politicians on whose behalf it is offered.

Another pleasantly drawn figure is that of M. Bergeret's friend and controversialist, the Abbé Lantaigne, who answers the Professor's apology: "That's exactly how the orators talked in Rome when Alaric entered it with his Visigoths. Though the orators of the fifth century uttered under the pine-trees of the Esquiline thoughts less vain than yours. For then Rome was Christian; and you are not." The Abbé, candidate for the mitre, spoils his chance by a *mot* at the expense of the Cardinal Archbishop: "His Eminence's poverty, at any rate in philosophy, is quite apostolic." As a foil to the intransigent Lantaigne you have the "opportunist" Abbé Guitrel, who hobnobs with the Prefect Worms-Clavelin, a Jew and a Freemason, and makes himself useful to the Prefect's wife by picking up old copes and chasubles for her to turn into sofa-coverings. The Prefect himself, who is very firm on maintaining the laws "so long as they are not administered"; the General of the district, who opines that for a hundred good reasons "Bazaine deserves his fate—and, besides, we needed a scapegoat"; the General's wife, a French Mrs. Major O'Dowd; the wily Cardinal Archbishop—these and a dozen others are sketched by M. France with innumerable touches of sly yet kindly fun. It is in

studies like this little book of M. France's, or like those of M. André Theuriet and M. Ferdinand Fabre, that you get the best chance of seeing a true reflection of the France of to-day. And yet people will go on reading "Gyp" and M. Henri Lavedan. And the *Vie Parisienne* (despite the protests of Puritan committee-men) continues to be the best thumbed paper in the London clubs.

"*Le Mannequin d'Osier.*"—Like its predecessor, the second book of "L'Histoire Contemporaine" has neither head nor tail, cheerfully ignores the Aristotelean canon of a single action with beginning, middle, and end; looks to the casual glance like a novel, yet to closer inspection proves to be something else; indeed, as the cant phrase goes, almost defies classification. The average novel-reader will regard it as a bewildering fraud, much as the illiterate sportsman in Stevenson's story of "The Wrong Box" regarded a copy of the *Athenæum* that chanced to come in his way. "It was all full of the most awful swipes about poetry and the use of the globes. It was the kind of thing that nobody could read out of a lunatic asylum. Golly, what a paper!" No doubt the average novel-reader will be tempted to exclaim over this "Mannequin d'Osier," "Golly, what a novel!" But all true Anatolians will enjoy "Le Mannequin d'Osier," none the less, rather the more, because it breaks away unconcernedly from the orthodox rules of what our forefathers liked to call "the

prose epic." As a matter of fact this blend which M. France gives us of fiction and philosophy, narrative and criticism, is not so great an innovation in literature as at first sight it may appear. You get it in the novels of Thomas Love Peacock, and in the "Noctes Ambrosianae" of Professor Wilson. You get it in "Tom Jones." You may even go farther back and find it in Shakespeare, if only you know where to look for it. Many of the speeches in "Hamlet," for instance, are dramatically inappropriate—ill suited to the time, the place, and the speaker—and would be sternly ruled out by the laws of the dramatic game, as we play that game to-day. But what was an occasional freak, a mere "letting off steam," in Shakespeare, is with M. Anatole France a deliberate policy—if it ought not rather to be called a necessity of temperament. M. France, in fact, in these volumes of "Histoire Contemporaine" (strictly speaking, the process began with an earlier book the "Opinions de M. Jérome Coignard") is doing precisely what Mr. Pater did in "Marius the Epicurean" and "Gaston de Latour"—using narrative, not for its own sake at all, but merely as a convenient vehicle for criticism of life. I suspect that this narrative criticism is a form "with a future." For, in the right hands, it is extremely agreeable. It adds to the pleasure which we get from "story telling"—discursive and disconnected as that story may be—the pleasure of meeting with criticism in an unusually modest guise. Instead of reading that "I, Walter

Pater," think this, or "I, Anatole France," think that, we read that some ostensibly fictitious person, Marius or M. Bergeret, "maître de conférences à la Faculté des lettres," thought it. Of course it comes to the same thing in the end. We get the criticism, but the critic's modesty is saved.

There is perhaps another reason than the natural shrinking of a modest temperament for M. France's present practice of ascribing his opinions to fictitious personages. They are opinions which in many cases are not likely to be popular with the "compact majority" among his own countrymen. We have seen that M. Bergeret in "L'Orme du Mail" called Joan of Arc a "mascotte"; M. France could hardly, in his proper person, have ventured upon that particular audacity. It is this same M. Bergeret, in "Le Mannequin d'Osier," who, gazing at the statesmen's portraits in the stationer's shop, asks himself, "if there is a single one of them who looks as though he could let slip the dogs of war and ravage the world. Their genius, like their power, is mediocre. They are not in a position to commit terrible faults. They are not great men, thank goodness! and we can sleep quietly in our beds." Who is it that, commenting upon the indignation aroused by Father Ollivier's description of the recent terrible fire at a Paris bazaar as an act of divine vengeance, slyly remarks that many people would rather the priest had ascribed to the Almighty, after the catastrophe, the saddened, modest, and decent atti-

tude of Monsieur the Prefect of Police? M. Anatole France? Oh, dear no!—M. Bergeret. And so the strong protests against the solitary confinement of prisoners, against capital punishment, against the part France took in the coercion of Greece, are technically the protests of M. Bergeret, whatever suspicion we may have as to their real author. Evidently there are excellent reasons why M. France should prefer to give us his criticism of contemporary life through the fictitious M. Bergeret. Nor need we complain—on the contrary, all who love quiet, scholarly humour will rejoice—that he makes M. Bergeret not only a mouthpiece but a "character"—a shy recluse who consoles himself for his domestic misfortunes by a philological excursus on the Eighth Book of the "Æneid," and whose sole vengeance for his conjugal dishonour is to pitch his wife's "mannequin d'osier" (*i.e.* dressmaker's "dummy") out of his study window. To know M. Bergeret is to love him.

L'Anneau d'Améthyste.—We shall have to talk of Uncle Bergeret. We do not select our own fathers, but, by way of compensation, literature offers us a free choice of uncles. We can all, if we will, be nephews of My Uncle Toby. There is Uncle Tom (of the Cabin) for those who prefer him. Parisians had their Uncle Sarcey. Evidently there is something in the avuncular relationship which tickles our fancy. Consider the generic nickname of the pawnbrokers. To be sure there

are "wicked uncles," but these are only in nursery tales. In plays the "uncle from America" is a wholly beneficent personage, who exists for the purpose of enriching youth and beauty at the right moment. . . . Therefore I say My Uncle Bergeret, meaning thereby to express a decent respect for him, as a man of an elder generation, mingled with a familiarity which comes of a family bond. He belongs to the illustrious line of characters in fiction whom we love because of the child in them, because they are without guile, or with a guile so transparent that it deceives nobody—Jack Falstaff, Malvolio, Don Quixote, Sir Roger de Coverley, Uncle Toby aforesaid, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Micawber, and Mr. Benjamin Goldfinch. The man who creates a character of this type makes a sensible addition to human happiness—to the "public stock of harmless pleasure." M. France's fancy had long been hovering round this type of character. The learned M. Sylvestre Bonnard, Membre de l'Institut, was his first shot at it. With the Abbé Coignard he got nearer the mark. Then, with M. Bergeret, he hit it full in the centre. In "L'Anneau d'Améthyste," the third volume of his most delectable series, M. Bergeret takes a fresh lease of life. He has put on a new man. For he is at last rid of his termagant wife, has established himself as a free and independent bachelor, with his books and a pet dog, and is no longer disturbed in the compilation of his "Virgilius Nauticus." In fact he is, as his creator says, nearing the blessed state of ataraxy. He tastes the profound bliss of solitude—bliss which is

sometimes the ecstasy of nailing up prints against the study wall. Count de Caylus considered that there was no pleasure more voluptuous than that of unpacking cases of Etruscan pottery. But, according to M. France, "of all the labours to which a worthy man may devote himself, the task of knocking nails into a wall is perhaps that which affords the most tranquil enjoyment." M. Bergeret, then, is no longer sad. Nor is he gay, either; for he has money troubles. "He was acquainted with the inelegancies of poverty. Money makes the man, as Pindar says."

How can he be gay? He is not in sympathy with his fellow-citizens. Unable to think and feel like them, he is cut off from the commerce of humanity, and thus deprived of that social consolation which penetrates even through the walls of a house and closed doors. The mere fact that he is a thinker renders him a strange being in everybody's eyes, disquieting, suspect. But he is not sad; for he can plunge into the silent orgies of meditation. And there is always his "Virgilius Nauticus":—

"M. Bergeret once more tackled the metamorphosis of Æneas his ships, a pretty folk-tale, rather a naïve one, perhaps, to be turned into language so noble. But M. Bergeret saw no harm in that. He was aware that nursery tales furnish poets with well-nigh all their material for epic; that for his poem Virgil had piously gathered together the riddles, word-plays, homely fables, and puerile imaginings of our ancestors, and that Homer, his

master, and the master of all the singers, had done nothing else than tell the stories that for a thousand years and more before his time had been told by the goodwives of Ionia and the fishermen of the Isles. For the rest, it was the least of his cares. He was concerned about quite another matter. A term which he met with in the charming story of the metamorphosis failed to present to his mind a sense sufficiently exact. Hence his trouble. . . . Bergeret, my friend, said he to himself, keep your eyes open here and show your sagacity. Bear in mind that Virgil always uses extreme precision when he treats of the technique of the arts; remember that he went yachting at Baiæ, that he was an expert in shipbuilding, and that he must needs, therefore, have expressed himself in this passage with exactness."

Sweet are the uses of philology. It tames the passions, whereas mere grammar appears to rouse them. Was it not a grammarian who publicly wished that a rival might be eternally damned for his Theory of Irregular Verbs? Now M. Bergeret forgives all men.

He even forgives the Anti-Dreyfusite crowd which flings stones through his windows. Remembering the part M. France played in the Zola trial, one was prepared to find "L'Anneau d'Améthyste" full of allusions to the Affair. M. Bergeret is of course on the unpopular side. But stone-throwing does not disturb his philosophic calm. He uses the brickbats for paper-weights, and only regrets that they do not bear inscriptions, like the stones found at Modena "which had been slung in the year 43 B.C.

by the soldiers of Hirtius and Pansa at the partisans of Octavius. These stones had indications inscribed on them of the places they were intended to hit. One was meant for Livia. From the usual humour of soldiers you can guess in what terms its inscription was couched." Cries of "Conspuez Bergeret! Death to the Jews!" Then, as soon as he could make himself heard, M. Bergeret resumed the thread of his discourse. "Horrible cruelties were committed after the defeat of the Antonine Consuls at Modena. It is not to be denied that since then our manners have become much softened." M. Bergeret's voice was once more drowned by the yelling of the crowd—and one envies M. France his power of dismissing the terrible Affair with irony so gentle.

It is his way throughout. At the height of a violent discussion on the eternal question M. Bergeret buries his nose in a book and slowly reads out these words: "On the side of liberty there was but an insignificant minority of educated people. The clergy almost to a man, the generals, the ignorant and fanatical populace, longed for a master." "What's that you're saying?" interrupts an indignant Dreyfusite. "Nothing," answers M. Bergeret; "I am reading a chapter from the history of Spain. The sketch of public feeling on the restoration of Ferdinand VII."

Our last glimpse of M. Bergeret in "L'Anneau d'Améthyste" gives great hope for his future. He is on the point of emerging at length from the obscurity of his little provincial town. He has been invited to Paris and

to lecture at the Sorbonne! One thinks of Mr. Micawber emigrating to Australia and becoming a J.P. There is even a hint that M. Bergeret may turn in the smooth evening of his days, like his master Renan, to bask (Pickwickianly) in the smiles of beauty. Bless his heart!

"*The Demands of Love.*"—According to temperament, people speak of the creed of Tolstoyism or the disease of Tolstoyitis. As a mere piece of style, however, simple, limpid, persuasive, trembling as one may say with emotion, "The Demands of Love" cannot but charm even those to whom the matter of the discourse may be bewildering, and perhaps repugnant. One recognises the large utterance, the marmorean purity, of a Marcus Aurelius or a Thomas à Kempis, and the native distinction of *les âmes bien-nées.* Here is proof, in the mere collocation of words, their indescribable touch of "inspiration," that the race of the saints and apostles never dies out. *Vitaï lampada tradunt.* And yet how different is Tolstoy from his forerunners! The Stoic Emperor says :—

"Of human life the time is a point, and the substance is in a flux, and the perception dull, and the composition of the whole body subject to putrefaction, and the soul a whirl, and fortune hard to divine, and fame a thing

devoid of judgment. And, to say all in a word, everything which belongs to the body is a stream, and what belongs to the soul is a dream and vapour, and life is a warfare and a stranger's sojourn, and after-fame is oblivion. What then is that which is able to conduct a man? One thing and only one, philosophy."

Turn from this solution of the fastidious, "self-regarding" scholar to Tolstoy's answer. For him it is not philosophy which is to conduct a man, but love, the love which does not shrink from embracing poverty and dirt and death.

"Lice, black bread, and want seem so terrible. But the bottom of the pit of want is not so deep after all, and we are often like the boy who clung by his hands, in terror, all night to the edge of the well into which he had stumbled, fearing the depth and the water he supposed to be there, while a foot below him was the dry bottom. Yet we must not trust to that bottom; we must go forward prepared to die. Only *that* love is true love which knows no limit to sacrifice—even unto death."

Again, compare the old "Imitation of Christ" with the new. "Keep company with the humble and the simple, with the devout and the virtuous; and confer with them of those things that may edify." Tolstoy might have written that. But Thomas à Kempis goes on: "Be not familiar with any woman; but in general commend all good women to God." There speaks the monk, the Christian misogynist; and Tolstoy cannot speak so.

He cannot wrap himself in a commendation of the starving Matrena to God.

"It seems necessary to keep a glass of milk; but Matrena has two unweaned babes, who can find no milk in their mother's breast, and a two-year-old child which is on the verge of starvation."

For the tone and tendency of this fragment all must be prepared who have followed the spiritual development of its author since he was brought, some twenty years ago, by the example of the peasant-saint Soutaieff, to regulate his life by the Sermon on the Mount. It is a plea for unqualified altruism. It carries the doctrines of the "brotherhood of man" and "non-resistance" to their logical conclusion. In the path of self-sacrifice there is for the sincere no half-way house. Charity must not be the mere abandonment of our superfluity, still less, of course, the "ransom" which the rich pay out of their superfluity in order to retain the rest. Renunciation must be complete—it must be Brand's "All or Nothing."

Tolstoy drives his point home by a concrete illustration. He imagines the case of a couple who, convinced of the sin of living an idle, luxurious life amid the general misery, give up all but a bare subsistence, and settle down in a village, intent upon helping their neighbours. But where is the help to stop?

"They might keep a pillow and blanket, so as to sleep as usual after a busy day, but a sick man is lying on a coat full of lice and is half-frozen at night, being

covered only with bark matting. They would have kept tea and food, but had to give it to some old pilgrims who were exhausted. At least it seemed right to keep the house clean, but beggar boys come and are allowed to spend the night, and——"

One shrinks from completing the quotation, for Tolstoy is as uncompromising in his realism as in his ethics. He goes on to the bitter end—

"A man comes who is a drunkard and a debauchee, whom they have helped several times, and who has always drunk whatever they gave him. He comes now, his jaw trembling, and asks for six shillings, to replace money he has stolen and drunk, for which he will be imprisoned if he does not replace it. They say they have only eight shillings, which they want for a payment due to-morrow. Then the man says, 'Yes, I see, you talk, but when it comes to acts you're like the rest: you let the man you call a brother perish, rather than suffer yourselves.' Are they to stop their sacrifice now? If so, why not sooner? Why begin at all? Where draw the line? If there is a limit to self-sacrifice, then it is all meaningless—or 'only has the dreadful meaning of hypocrisy.'"

All this, it may be said, and will be said, is magnificent heroism, but pitiful reasoning. A precocious schoolboy who has dabbled in Darwin and Herbert Spencer could demolish the theory of unqualified altruism in a jiffy. The world is founded, he would declare, on egoism. It has been created by the survival of the

fittest in the struggle for existence. Civilisation, the arts, material and intellectual progress are all developments of self-interest. If all our energies were concentrated on neglecting ourselves and helping our neighbours, the work of the world would, first, be badly done, then cease to be done at all, and we should lapse into barbarism. He would add that the doctrine is immoral. The drunkard whom Tolstoy postulates would be further degraded by accepting our six shillings; he would become a drunkard *plus* a beggar. Our gift would have harmed him as well as ourselves. Moreover, the theory of altruism is, in strictness, unworkable; for it demands that while we should all be intent on giving help, we should all be equally intent on refusing it. The result would be a deadlock, and we should be in a more ludicrously pathetic situation than the villagers who lived by taking in each other's washing. Finally, Tolstoy's principle of non-resistance would mean the abolition of justice, the delivering up of right, bound hand and foot, to might. Logically, then, Tolstoyism has not a leg to stand on.

And yet—and yet—this is no case for logic-grinding. We must all be convinced at heart that the spread of such doctrines makes for righteousness, and that the men who preach them are the salt of the earth. Tolstoy, giving up all the world holds dear, going about in rags, putting his hand to the plough, and not drawing back, is one of the noblest figures of all time. We rank him with Father Damien among the lepers of Molokai.

And what Stevenson said so finely of Damien, we say to ourselves of him, that he is our father.

"The man who tried to do what Damien did is my father, and the father of all who love goodness; and he was your father, too, if God had given you grace to see it."

"*Wisdom and Destiny.*"—The author of "The Treasure of the Humble" has enriched the literature of meditation with a book on "Wisdom and Destiny." There are hardly so many volumes of that literature that our shelves "groan" with them; and the smallest contributions are to be thankfully received. Not that M. Maeterlinck's is a small contribution. It abounds in "the two best things, which are sweetness and light"—as Swift said, long before Matthew Arnold. Just now we do not consider these the two best things. We are all for Mr. Rudyard Kipling and first-rate fighting men. We choose to forget Pascal's saying that "most of the mischief in the world would never happen if men would only be content to sit still in their parlours." "Wisdom and Destiny," like "The Treasure of the Humble," is a book for the rare parlour-folk. Mr. Alfred Sutro, who is responsible for the English translation of both volumes, suggests a distinction between them which strikes one as rather formal than real. Beauty is the aim of the

earlier book, he says; truth of the later. I venture to doubt if M. Maeterlinck himself would accept any classification that parted truth from beauty. In both books, as it seems to me, he has been seeking neither truth nor beauty, but simply—himself. The distinction I would draw is that what he sought in "The Treasure of the Humble" in "Wisdom and Destiny" he has found. In the earlier book we saw his mind only in the making, still under the domination of other minds, an intelligence

Sentant encor le lait dont elle fut nourrie.

The pen was the pen of M. Maeterlinck, but the thought was the thought of Plotinus, of Novalis, of the Admirable Ruysbroeck. In "Wisdom and Destiny" M. Maeterlinck has realised—and reveals—himself. It is a book not of *choses lues*, but of *choses vécues;* and that makes all the difference. For we do not greatly care to hear why a man admires the so Admirable Ruysbroeck, whereas we all have an interest in learning his experience of life—I mean, of course, the inner life, the contemplative life, the life that so few of us have time to live. Those of us who have had the time can compare their spiritual experiences with M. Maeterlinck's; those of us who have not can still take pleasure in following the adventures of a fellow-man's soul among the mysteries and moralities, and in contemplating the goal to which those adventures have led him. In either case, we have a treatise on the Art of Living—and on the Art of Loving. For M. Maeterlinck the two things are one and the same.

At first sight the new gospel seems as old as the hills. We are to cultivate Wisdom, and what the Theosophists, I believe, call the Higher Carelessness. We are, in Mr. Henley's phrase, to be masters of our fate and captains of our soul. We are to grasp the truth that "to be happy is only to have freed one's soul from the unrest of happiness." Superficially, this looks like the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius—revised by Renan. But on examination you find that M. Maeterlinck gives a new significance to the old terms. What, for instance, is wisdom? You had supposed it to be, if not "sweet reasonableness," at any rate a "function," as the mathematicians say, of reason. But, for M. Maeterlinck, "reason produces not wisdom, which is rather a craving of soul. It dwells up above, far higher than reason; and thus is it of the nature of veritable wisdom to do countless things whereof reason disapproves, or shall but approve hereafter. So was it that wisdom one day said to reason: It were well to love one's enemies and return good for evil. Reason, that day, tiptoe on the loftiest peak in its kingdom, at last was fain to agree. But wisdom is not yet content, and seeks ever further, alone." There is only one reason for all; but by no means only one wisdom. "If Jesus Christ and Socrates both were to meet the adulterous woman, the words that their reason would prompt them to speak would vary but little; but belonging to different worlds would be the working of the wisdom within them, far beyond words and far beyond thoughts." And while there is no love in reason,

there is much in wisdom. Hence a difference between the sage and the thinker. "The thinker throws open the road 'which leads from the seen to the unseen'; the sage throws open the highway that takes us from that which we love to-day to that which we yet shall love, and the paths that ascend from that which has ceased to console to that which, for long time to come, shall be laden with deep consolation."

Nor does wisdom consist in renunciation, in stoicism, in ascetics of any sort. Here M. Maeterlinck throws Marcus Aurelius overboard, and out-Renans Renan. Renunciation, like humility, is among the "parasitic virtues" against which we have to be on our guard. "There is a certain humility that ranks with parasitic virtues, such as sterile self-sacrifice, arbitrary chastity, blind submission, frantic renouncement, penitence, false shame, and many others, which have from time immemorial turned aside from their course the waters of human morality and forced them into a stagnant pool." So, too, we must clear our minds of cant about destiny. "It is wrong to think of destiny only in connection with death and disaster." We do so merely because it is of the nature of happiness to be less manifest than misfortune. "The whole village, the town, will flock to the spot where some wretched adventure takes place; but there are none will pause for an instant and let their eyes rest on a kiss, on a vision of beauty that gladdens the soul, a ray of love that illumines the heart."

In a remark of Johnson to Boswell, "Every man is

to take care of his own wisdom and his own virtue, without minding too much what others think," you may find, if you choose, though only in the germ, that philosophy of enlightened egoism which has since been carried to lengths so amazing by M. Maurice Barrès with his *culte du Moi.* It is a philosophy that finds much favour with M. Maeterlinck. He even contrives to import it into the Catechism and our Duty to our Neighbour. "You are told you should love your neighbour as yourself; but if you love yourself meanly, childishly, timidly, even so shall you love your neighbour. Learn, therefore, to love yourself with a love that is wise and healthy, that is large and complete. This is less easy than it would seem. There is more active charity in the egoism of a strenuous clairvoyant soul than in all the devotion of the soul that is helpless and blind. Before you exist for others it behoves you to exist for yourself; before giving, you first must acquire." Does not that strike you as a novel and an ingenious turning of the altruist position?

On the subject of love in the special sense, the love between man and woman, M. Maeterlinck says many acute and even many fine things—as this (which should be Romeo's excuse to Juliet for Rosaline): "In love, as in life, expectation avails us but little; through loving we learn to love"—and this: "All that is loyal within you will flower in the loyalty of the woman you love; whatever of truth there abides in your soul will be soothed by the truth that is hers; and her strength of

character can only be enjoyed by that which is strong in you." . . . But the temptation to select tit-bits of this kind must be resisted. There is a certain indiscretion, not to say immodesty, in underlining with approval what another man reveals of the secrets of love; for we may seem that way to wear our hearts upon our sleeve.

An Investigation.—The late Miss Martineau appears to have written a "Life in the Sick-room." Need one apologise for having neglected to read this book? I fancy not, for the reason that, whatever it has to say on the subject, must, in the nature of things, now be obsolete. Our sick-rooms change with the times. At first blush, you might think otherwise. You might look to find the permanent elements of our human nature galumphing round when a man is stretched helpless on his back, and the great mundane movement has to go on without his assistance. But the truth is, everything dates. You might suppose, for instance, that the female form has not altered in shape during the last fifty years or so. Yet an Etty nude, as everybody knows, is not a Henner nude. And however "abscons," as Rabelais would say, your work may be, you cannot abstract from it the influence of the time. In Rossetti's various Damozels, mediæval-ideal as their costume purports to be, you can distinguish in a moment between those painted during,

and those painted after, the crinoline period. And so there is a fashion in sick-rooms. These were once very solemn apartments. In one of his later *Spectators* Addison writes himself a letter from a sick man, a "Thought in Sickness" he calls it, which is a dismal, undertakerish sort of thing. "Were I able," says he, "to dress up several Thoughts of a serious nature, which have made great Impressions on my Mind during a long Fit of Sickness, they might not be an improper Entertainment. . . . Among all the Reflections which usually rise in the Mind of a sick Man, who has Time and Inclination to consider his approaching End, there is none more natural than that of his going to appear Naked and Unbodied before Him," etc. Naked and Unbodied! Bless the man! Your modern invalid, I will go bail, never thinks of himself in that light. Contrast an Early Victorian sick-room, say Dick Swiveller's. And now Influenza has changed everything, given a distinctive *cachet* to the sick-room of the moment.

What are the best books for the Influenzee? It was Mr. Birrell who lured me into trying Borrow once more. "For invalids," he writes, "there are no books like Borrow's. Lassitude and Languor, horrid hags, simply pick up their trailing skirts and scuttle out of any room into which he enters. They cannot abide him. A single chapter of Borrow is air and exercise; and, indeed, the exercise is not always gentle. 'I feel,' said an invalid, laying down 'The Bible in Spain,' as she spoke, upon the counterpane, 'as if I had been gesticulating violently for

the space of two hours. She then sank into deep sleep, and is now hale and hearty." This lady's malady is not named; but it is clear to me she was no Influenzee. Borrow sent up my temperature two degrees. It is, I know, a point of "good form" to be a Borrovian nowadays—Mr. Birrell must divide the blame for that with Professor Saintsbury and Mr. Watts-Dunton—but under the stress of Influenza the truth will out. The fellow, from the very first, is so aggressively East Anglian—as the Count in the anecdote was "si jeune et déjà si Moldo-Valache." As a West countryman, I find that, in sickness, the mere thought of East Anglia is dangerous. Sir Thomas Browne seems to me the only redeeming feature of that curious part of England, and he, unfortunately, has long since quitted it. And then Borrow's tomfool nonsense about Papistry and Charlie-o'er-the-waterism and Lieutenant P——! A very few pages of Borrow—Borrow on the "cranky" side of him—are sure to bring on a relapse, and pneumonia may set in, for all you know. Mr. Birrell must really be more careful.

I tried Balzac, but found him no more suitable than Borrow for the Influenzee. One gets tired of all these Balzacian young men "on the make" who for the most part are shocking bounders. Balzac's interminable descriptions, you must admit, are trying, even in rude health; in the sick-room they become simply impossible. And his perpetual orgies—I mean the sort of thing you get in the "Peau de Chagrin" and the "Illusions Perdues"

—how *could* the people in the forties stand all this racket? Balzac, in the sick-room, means a headache in five minutes. His only advantage is that (in his common one-franc edition) he is extremely light in the hand, and that if you spill a bottle of medicine over him it doesn't matter in the least. For in choosing books for the sick-room you must remember that the inside of them is not the primary consideration. How many ounces Avoirdupois do they weigh? And can they be propped open easily on the counterpane? These are the questions you have to begin with. On no account ought the size to exceed fcap. 8vo. This at once rules out the Talboys Gibbon, the Subscription Meredith and Stevenson, and many other works of high emprise which the Influenzee in his wilder moments thinks he would like to tackle, but finds he cannot. It does *not* rule out—

Peacock,
Jane Austen,
Bagehot,
Casanova,
Copperfield,

all of which I tried—and found of no use whatever for Influenza, the Micawber fragments alone excepted.

In this quandary, I returned to the man who had originally given me a false start in quest of books for the sick—and then I found that I ought never to have left him. Mr. Augustine Birrell is *the* author for the Influenzee. Unlike Mr. Silas Wegg in the case of Gibbon, "I have been right slap through him very lately," and

believe that, if complete sets of his works were distributed among the sick-rooms of Great Britain and Ireland, much suffering would be alleviated. *Imprimis*, he is what he calls Sainte-Beuve, a quiet author. "A noisy author is as bad as a barrel-organ; a quiet one is as refreshing as a long pause in a foolish sermon." *Item*, he has no "high doctrine" about Literature or Art; he is free from the sickly disease of *literaturitis*. "There is much pestilent trash," says he, "now being talked about 'Ministry of Books' and the 'Sublimity of Art,' and I know not what other fine phrases. It almost amounts to a religious service, conducted before an altar of first editions." A man of Law, of the Senate (as Mr. Micawber would say), and of practical affairs, he allows literature its proper space in life, and no more. *Item*, as a critic he is shy of first principles, being merely one of "the great class of sensible men and women who delight in reading for the pleasure it gives them." And so he doesn't care a dump for the Idols of the Market Place, but has the courage to write this sort of thing: "Suppose one dreamt (gentle reader, remember this is nothing but a dream) that there was one woebegone creature alive at this moment in this Britain of ours who cordially disliked, and shrank from, the poetry of Sir Edwin Arnold, Mr. Lewis Morris, and Mr. Alfred Austin, who could not away with 'Robert Elsmere,' 'The Wages of Sin,' or 'Donovan,' who abhorred the writings of Mrs. Lynn Linton, Archdeacon Farrar, and Mr. Shorthouse, who hated 'Amiel's Journal,' 'Marie Bashkirtseff,' and

'Little Lord Fauntleroy,' who found it easy, and even helpful, to live for six months at a time without reading a new novel by Mr. Hall Caine or Mr. Black, who failed to respond to the careful and often-repeated raptures of those wise critics who assured him that the author of 'Amos Barton' and 'Middlemarch' cowers and crouches by the side of Mr. Hardy and Mr. Meredith. . . ." After reading this, the Influenzee immediately feels better, and is allowed to sit up till tea-time.

In gratitude for which, I do hereby graciously forgive Mr. Birrell for coolly "lifting" Elia's "measured malice of music" and foisting it upon us as "the measureless malice of the metricists."

MEN AND WOMEN

Michelet's View.—In a paper written only a year or two before his death—that is to say, when the choice of such a theme could have nothing whatever to do with the May of Youth and Bloom of Lustihood—Renan deplores the lack of all serious investigation into the subject of love. "It is surprising," says he, "that science and philosophy, adopting the frivolous practice traditional with mundane people of treating the most mysterious of all causes as mere matter for jesting, have not made love the capital object of their observations and speculations. Of all facts in the universe it is the most extraordinary and the most suggestive. Through a prudery which, in the region of philosophic reflection, is sheer nonsense, people either do not speak of it at all or confine themselves to a few foolish platitudes. They are unwilling to see that here they approach the very heart of things, and come face to face with the most profound secret in the world. The fear of the weaker brethren ought not, however, to prevent that which is

grave from being treated with gravity." I fancy Renan, when he wrote this, must have overlooked Michelet. Nothing, surely, could exceed the gravity of Michelet's treatise on love? "L'Amour" was published in 1858, when its author had attained the grandfatherly age of sixty. A sexagenarian discoursing on love is hardly likely to play the giddy trifler. One might as well expect brilliant pyrotechnics from an extinct volcano. For fantasias of passionate amorism authors, like other people, have to be "caught young." The "frosty pows" treat the subject with a certain aloofness, if not with positive dislike. Look at the absence of passion from the later social dramas of Ibsen. Thackeray more than once remarked how embarrassing it was for an elderly gentleman to describe the raptures of love's young dream. Anyway, Michelet is as solemn as an owl.

He wrote his book because he thought that France was in a bad way. The statistics of births and marriages had frightened him. There were nine thousand fewer marriages in 1851 than in 1850, and seven thousand fewer in 1852 than in 1851. Population was stationary, or rather just beginning to diminish. It was about this time that Dumas was rehabilitating the courtesan in "La Dame aux Camélias." Murger had just been sentimentalising the grisette in the "Vie de Bohême." Another dramatist had discovered a new order of monster, "Les Filles de Marbre." Michelet's book was in some sort a counterblast: a glorification of the hearth and home, a sermon on "How to be Happy though

Married." For Michelet's title is far wider than his real subject. It is not love "in the aibstrack" he deals with, nor love the blind, irresistible, elemental passion, nor love as known to the Don Juans of this world, nor idyllic love, nor the loves of the angels, nor the loves of the triangles; it is just conjugal love. You see he had his eye on those statistics. The like statistics in France in our own day are, I believe, still more disquieting.

Whether any number of editions of Michelet's "L'Amour" will exert any influence on the statistics of French births and marriages is quite another matter. I have my doubts. The book is likely, I fear, to frighten "intending" bridegrooms; it lays too heavy a burden upon them. Michelet expects the husband to be not merely mate, comforter, and sick-nurse of the wife, but her educator and, as he calls it, her "creator." He has to fashion her very being, like clay in the hands of the potter. He has to be her father-confessor, *vice* the priest, expelled. Whatever she does, he has to forgive her, for she is not responsible for her actions. "Woman is an invalid" is the bed-rock of his doctrine. To give a certain plausibility to this position he is driven to exaggerate enormously the difference between the sexes. "Woman does nothing as we do it. Her blood does not circulate like ours. She does not breathe like us. She does not eat, does not digest, as we do. [Michelet is terribly physiological.] She has her own special language of sighs and sobs," etc. etc. She must on no account be allowed to work; nature forbids it.

She must be humoured, coaxed, petted, and caressed like a child. It is only through her husband that she lives. You see the couple—the man sublime in strength, wisdom, and indulgence; the woman weak, irresponsible, incapable. All this is terribly 1858. It is the very ideal which Ibsen wrote his "Doll's House" to shatter. And I fear that all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot now put that particular Humpty-Dumpty together again.

And yet this incorrigible idealist will not see that, while sentimentalising women, he is really condemning them to an odious inferiority. "Who," says he, with imperturbable naïveté—"who will have the audacity to discuss whether she is higher or lower than man? She is both one and the other. It is with her as it is with the sky in relation to the earth: it is below and above and all round. In her we had our birth. Through her we live. We are enveloped by her. We breathe her; she is the atmosphere, our heart's blood." "Gents," says the bagman in "Pickwick," "I give you woman." Michelet "gives us" woman with a vengeance. And to think that the author of this amazing rodomontade was a gentleman of sixty!

I do not venture to recommend Michelet's book to any woman of sense and spirit. She would probably throw it at one's head. But I daresay the ladies of his own day took it all as a prodigious compliment. It seems, somehow, to harmonise well with the ringlets and lawn-sleeves and cameo-brooches of the period—though

no doubt its "sensibility" and optimism affiliate it, as a critic has said, to the eighteenth century. Both Diderot and Rousseau would have wept copious tears over it. It has caught their very tone of unctuous nature-worship; it gives their very mixture of glowing dithyramb and crude physiological detail. And the florid style abounds in the old familiar words—"flamme," "paradis," "roses," "rêve," "morbidesse," "délicat," "éthéré." Oh, the elderly troubadour!

Perhaps the most striking absurdity of the book is its categorical imperative in the matter of marriage. Its lesson—"Marry young, love only one woman, and love her all your life"—is not put forward as a counsel of perfection, but as a bounden duty on every adult male. Michelet will not admit for a moment that there are temperaments for which marriage is not a good thing. . . . But there is this to be said in his favour. He practised what he preached. He was a devoted and, it is clear, a happy husband. His widow long outlived him, and, true to his principles, made a sort of religious cult of his memory. That was an express part of his scheme in this book. The woman must survive, he said, and keep up "l'amour par delà la mort." "C'est à l'homme de mourir et à la femme de pleurer." Well, a sentence to perpetual weeping is better than suttee, at any rate, but there are, I believe, a few merry widows left.

Tolstoy fils v. *Tolstoy père.*—There have been people who professed to discern a subtle connection between

music and mathematics. Among them one may safely reckon undergraduates, who, like other cloistered persons, are apt to develop a morbid taste for subtleties. These will tell you that any "man"—in the undergraduate sense—who plays the piano in college after ten o'clock at night will be found, on inquiry, to be a mathematical scholar. On the outside of this man's "oak" you may confidently reckon upon finding another "man"—banging his bath with a poker by way of protest. He is—inevitably—reading for classical moderations. Thus the subtle connection is made out, and you feel that this world is no longer a mighty maze without a plan. The worst of it is that, once started on the track of subtle connections, you find it difficult to leave off. Alliteration lures you. If music and mathematics, why not music and—marriage? That the undergraduate mind has not detected this connection is, doubtless, only because marriage happens to be the one subject excluded from the range of undergraduate experience.

And so the discovery was reserved for Leo Tolstoy.

How long is it since "The Kreutzer Sonata" frighted this isle (not to mention the Continent) from its propriety? Long enough, perhaps, for people to forget that this opuscule was quite as violent an attack upon music as upon marriage. Its hero, Pozdnisheff, ended by killing his wife. But he began by reviling the Kreutzer.

"What a terrible thing that sonata is!" he exclaimed;

"especially that *presto*. And music is a terrible thing generally. What is it? Why does it do what it does?" "They say that music thrills the soul; disgusting falsehood. It acts, acts frightfully (I speak for myself), but not in an ennobling fashion. It does nothing in an ennobling fashion, nor degrading, but it irritates and excites. How shall I express it? Music makes me forget my true position; it transports me into a condition not my own. Under the influence of music I seem to feel what I do not feel, to comprehend what I do not comprehend, to be able to do what I cannot. Music appears to me to act like yawning or laughter; I have no desire to sleep, but I yawn when I see others yawn; without cause for laughter I laugh when I see others laugh. Music transports me into the condition of soul in which the musical composer found himself when he wrote. I confound my soul with his, and I pass from one condition into another. But why is all this?"

Pozdnisheff did not know why, and lashed himself into a fury in consequence. Ultimately he drove a dagger into the pianist, after the "hireling violinist" had fled. And there was an end of the Kreutzer Sonata. The moral is obvious. Once more alliteration exerts its baleful influence. Music and marriage and—murder.

But that was not Tolstoy's moral. His moral was that marriage ought to be made a celibate union—"sans musique," as the gentleman says in "Divorçons." Some one timidly offered Benedick's objection that the

world must be peopled. "But why live?" retorted the amazing Pozdnisheff. "The Schopenhauers, the Hartmanns, the Buddhists rightly say that the greatest good is Nirvana, non-Existence. . . . According to all the doctrines of the Church, the world shall come to an end. Science arrives at the same fatal conclusion. What, then, is strange if, according to moral teaching, the result should be the same?"

This doctrine was not received with marked enthusiasm. In fact, oblivion was allowed to scatter her poppy over "The Kreutzer Sonata" until the *Nouvelle Revue* came out with a counterblast, the "Chopin Prelude," whereof the author—oh, irony!—is Leo's own son, Count Lvovitch Tolstoy.

As the title shows, we are taken back to the old theme, the connection between marriage and music. They are both rehabilitated. Music is no longer a morbid excitement prompting to murder. It is a sedative and a tonic, leading to early marriage. Two preludes of Chopin, the fifteenth, *sostenuto*, and the sixteenth, *presto con fuoco*, do the business for young Krioukof, the Moscow student who loves the Princess Sonitchka. "When he was troubled nothing calmed him like music; he would then put into his playing all that he felt in his soul, without caring whether he had a listener or not." After sitting for an hour at the piano he went out to call on his fellow-student Komkof. Now Komkof, though still *in statu pupillari*, was a married man. You see, when I said that marriage was excluded

from the range of undergraduate experience, I was reckoning without the University of Moscow. This Komkof is a terrible fellow, quite as intransigent as Pozdnisheff, though in precisely the opposite direction. His advice to both sexes is: marry as soon as you are of marriageable age. Never mind about an income, a position. Marry on the threshold of life. Marry as a student; you will have the calmer mind for your studies. "Maybe you will have more cares, but your capacities will also be multiplied a hundredfold. There you have the secret of marriage—a secret which celibates do not so much as suspect—the married man develops to an astonishing extent; notwithstanding his added difficulties in the struggle for existence, he feels his individual powers doubled." If, Komkof continues for Krioukof's benefit, you are driven to choose between the University and marriage, you are a fool to hesitate. Take "All for Marriage, and the World well Lost," as your motto.

Wild Komkofs shall not drag me into a discussion of this question of early marriage. It is, very literally, as old as Adam. Primeval man generally married early — and often. Our English artisans, I believe, have long acted upon Komkoffian principles. The married undergraduate, however, is still rare in this country — though one does remember a story about "Mamma, here's a lark! papa's ploughed again!" I content myself with remarking that Count Lvovitch ruthlessly "makes hay" of his father's plea for uni-

versal celibacy. He points out the inconsistency which vitiates the paternal position. We are to aim at the regeneration of humanity through purity—with the inevitable result that there will be no humanity left to regenerate. Komkof roundly declares that "The Kreutzer Sonata" has done infinite harm. He hints not darkly at the teaching of "insensate fanatics." And young Krioukof goes home, resolved to give up the University, father, mother, household, and marry Sonitchka on the spot. Of course he "signifies the same in the usual way"—musically. "Opening the piano, he struck with all his force on the keyboard. The puissant, passionate sounds of the Chopin prelude spread through the room, alarming the silence of the night, and filling it with their vibrations." Music and marriage are alike avenged. Altogether, this "Chopin Prelude" of Count Lvovitch Tolstoy's is what one may call a literary parricide—a parricide committed *presto con fuoco.*

Misogyny

Strindberg and Others.—The Latin tag declared the hardest thing about poverty to be that it made men ridiculous. One may say the same thing about that curious poverty of temperament which is called misogyny. The incorrigible misogynist is a grotesque figure. He tickles the sense of humour—from his own utter lack of it. His disease, of course, is rare. He is a "case," as remarkable in his way as the gentleman in *Punch* who had "brongkitis in every blessed limb of his body." Perhaps it would be more rigorously scientific to call him an anachronism. For there was a time when he flourished as an orthodox, conventional type. This was in what Comte called the Theological Age. Theology encouraged him, and provided him with a stock argument. Needless to say, the name of that argument was Eve. It was held that there had been a Great Betrayal, and the thing rankled. "Our Bedlam Eve, to save her longing, sold us all for an Apple," says Francis Osborne in his "Advice to a Son." Osborne wrote in the middle of the seventeenth

century, so that his resentment was sufficiently retrospective. But the view runs through all the ages. A misogynist in "Shirley," Joe Scott, will be found nourishing the old grievance so late as Napoleon's march to Moscow. Joe quotes with gusto from the Second Epistle to Timothy. "Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." An argument that appealed at long intervals to men so dissimilar as St. Paul, Francis Osborne, and Joe Scott evidently has claims to be considered what Dick Swiveller would call a "staggerer." The primitive or theological misogynist rested his case on Eve and the Apple. Further development of the position was unnecessary. It was a *chose jugée* in the Garden of Eden.

Early misogynists who had never heard of Eve naturally laboured under a great disadvantage. Homer was in this predicament. It will, I know, be objected that Homer was not a misogynist. A misogynist, the poet to whom we owe the picture of a devoted woman awaiting a roving husband patiently for twenty years! I reply that Homer was a misogynist of the worst or disguised sort, the sort that kicks downstairs in the very act not of dissembling but of simulating love. For he represents this woman, during her twenty years of grass-widowhood, as really grieved not by her suitors' suggestions of her husband's death, but by the quantity of pork they ate. And when Odysseus did return, did he spend a second honeymoon with Penelope? No; he preferred to associate with the swineherd. The

meaning of these insinuations is as clear as their manner was perfidious. Homer was a "hard-shell" misogynist. Later Greek poets followed Homer's lead. The misogyny of Euripides is notorious. As for Aristophanes, most of his remarks about women are unfit for publication. But if you come to that, misogyny was an integral part of the Greek social system — misogyny regularised and, as it were, codified.

Mediæval misogyny was of course a corollary of the monkish system. It crops up in the most unexpected places, even in the seraphic St. Thomas à Kempis. "Be not familiar with any woman; but in general commend all good women to God," he says in Book I. chapter viii. of the *Imitation*. This reads harmlessly at first blush, but consider it a moment and you will see the implication is that woman is what Dumas *fils* called her in the Preface to "La Femme de Claude"—"la bête." This is the orthodox view for monks and the celibate clergy. Of that celibacy, by the way, a curious explanation is put forward by the Francis Osborne I have already cited. "The wily Priests," he says, "are so tender of their own conveniences, as to forbid all marriage to themselves upon as heavy a punishment as they do polygamy to others: now if nothing capable of the name of felicity was ever, by men or angels, found to be denied to the priesthood, may not marriage be strongly suspected to be by them thought out of that list? Though, to render it the more glib to the wider swallow of the long-abused laity, they have gilt it with the

glorious epithet of a Sacrament, which yet they loathe to clog their own stomachs withal." Misogyny, however, in ecclesiastical circles, was never confined to the celibate priesthood. There is the conspicuous case of the Rev. John Knox, who, though he married twice, declared how necessary it was "that this monstriferous empire of women (which, among all enormities that this day do abound upon the face of the whole earth, is most detestable and damnable) be openly and plainly declared to the world." "Monstriferous" is a delightful *trouvaille.*

On these various lines the antique misogyny proceeded, and, taken altogether, the thing was not displeasing, for the reason that it was naïve, instinctive, *kata phusin* as pedants used to say. It is your modern misogyny, professing to be based on scientific observation, the laws of physiology, statistical tables, evolution and what not, that is so mightily offensive. Schopenhauer, as everybody knows, is the most—what shall I say?—monstriferous in this kind: Schopenhauer who derided the "unæsthetic sex," and asked why we gave the name of the "fair sex" to "that undersized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged race." As a paradoxical sally it was good enough, perhaps, but the nuisance was that the *agelasts* (to borrow Mr. Meredith's Rabelaisian name for the tribe of non-humorous philosophers) took up the cry. There was Nietzsche. And there is Strindberg, whose drama of misogyny, "The Father," has been set before the English public in a translation by Miss Erichsen.

If ever a play was entitled to the full honours of the epithet monstriferous that play is "The Father." Three women constitute the father's household, and between them they do him to death, apparently because (as, it seems, Dr. Watts did *not* say) "it is their nature to." His spiritualist mother-in-law poisons his child's mind with superstition. His wife, out of sheer sex-pride and lust for domination ("I have never looked at a man," she remarks, "without knowing myself his superior"), thwarts his life, breaks down his will, and finally unhinges his mind. Then his old nurse, coaxing him as though he were a little child, slips on the strait-waistcoat. The moral of it seems to be that woman is the enemy, and that the more we love her the more hostile we make her. "The woman was your enemy," says the lady to her husband, "and love between the sexes is strife." Well, the "duel of sex" is, of course, a very old idea, but its termination in a strait-waistcoat is certainly novel. What is the origin of Strindberg's fierce misogyny? We are given to understand that he has met with much misfortune in life. The reason seems inadequate. For nearly every man jack of us can say, with the hairdresser whom Borrow met at Byron's funeral, "I, too, have been unhappy." Some drown their sorrows in the flowing bowl, others in a sense of humour. Either expedient is to be preferred, I submit, to a bitter, brutish, and (if you look at it all round) silly misogyny.

Humour in Women

Its Vindication.—Two ladies have combined to air a long-standing grievance of their sex—the injustice of the accusation that women have no sense of humour. Briefly, their contention is that women's sense of humour, while as keen as men's, is more fastidious. There are jokes which amuse men and do not amuse women, but to say this "is not to prove that those jokes are good; and—the assertion is bold, but we cannot refrain from making it—we believe that they belong, as a matter of fact, to the more primitive form of humour." This primitive form of humour is sometimes described as "rollicking," and its point is to exhibit people in more or less undignified positions. Examples (let us say): Mr. Pickwick in the pound, the intoxicated Shepherd at the Brick-lane Branch. "It may be freely and at once conceded that women are not amused by humour of this class. They think it silly, undignified, and often coarse." Well, it is quite true that this is the most ancient form of fun, which largely consisted of what the author of

"The Shaving of Shagpat" would call "thwackings." There was the notorious case of Davus. Scapin thwacked Géronte. Jodelet and Mascarille were soundly thwacked by their masters. It is fun which runs right through the ages. "A dignitary subjected to indignities" is the formula of Mr. Pinero's farces, from "The Magistrate" to "Dandy Dick." Christmas Pantomime still delights in flattening Policeman X to a wafer behind a door. Our two ladies complain that it is cruel fun, and that is undeniable. For many centuries, humour was only cruelty under another name.

Woman does not laugh at this class of joke, "not so much because her perceptions are dull in one direction as because they are keen in another." She does not belong to the "gentle" sex for nothing. "To see a human being made a fool of is too painful to be amusing." But are not our two ladies a little disingenuous here? Are they not tacitly contrasting the most refined women with the least refined men? That is a process that may easily be reversed. For example, when the boy in "The Story of an African Farm" is cruelly thrashed, "Tant' Sannie felt half sorry for the lad; but she could not help laughing, it was always so funny when any one was going to have a whipping." But to cite such cases is not to play the game fairly.

If men have a stronger, or more inclusive, sense of humour than women, that, it is suggested, is partly because the sense in women is suppressed on the general principle that women ought to have less freedom than

men. "Especially do we notice this in the case of religious or improper jokes, at which even a bishop, being a man, is allowed to laugh, but the laugh of a woman seems to imply profanity or want of modesty." Now the "classic place" on this point is of course to be found (like nearly all good things) in Boswell—and, oddly enough, there happens to be a bishop in it. Johnson had said that a certain woman was fundamentally sensible—but had said it in other words, which I will not quote for fear of shocking prudes. The expression which Johnson used, says Boswell, "was so ludicrous when contrasted with his gravity, that most of us could not forbear tittering and laughing; though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's back who sat on the same settee with her." The respectable Hannah More, of all women! Thus we see that women do not always repress their sense of humour so sedulously as bishops. Our ladies have advanced too wide a generalisation.

Perhaps—I offer this only as a Pious Opinion and not as an Article of Faith—we are apt to credit men with the stronger sense of humour, because of the two sexes they are the more hearty laughers. The gentler sex merely giggles. "Homeric" laughter, "laughter holding both his sides," is masculine. According to Mrs. Piozzi, Johnson used to say "that the size of a man's understanding might always be measured by his mirth." And he illustrated his own theory, for Tom

Davies said he "laughed like a rhinoceros." The elder Mr. Weller laughed till he was purple. Ladies do not laugh in this way—and perhaps, on æsthetic grounds, it is just as well. . . . But, on the whole, I daresay our two ladies are quite right in contending that this sense of humour is a question of blood rather than of sex. "Humour, or the want of it, will generally be found to run in families; if the men are amusing, so as a rule are the women; if the women are dull, so, but incomparably more so, are the men." Laughers of either sex are born, not made. "C'est la faute à la fatalité," as La Belle Hélène used to sing to Offenbach's music.

Timidity

Its Varieties.—The subject of timidity is one that comes home to all, or nearly all, of us. The vast majority of people are timid in their youth. A considerable minority remain timid all their lives. Was Shakespeare timid? If his plays do not show it, perhaps his marriage with Anne Hathaway does. But, some will think, his plays show it too. A man who had never known timidity could scarcely have written "Hamlet." And what about the evidence of the sonnets? Milton, a recluse by temperament before he was a recluse by necessity, must have been, like every other recluse, *un timide.* Tennyson was in the same case, still more Tennyson's friend Edward FitzGerald, and again FitzGerald's friend Thackeray—on his own confession. Richardson was "as timid as they make 'em." Of a few famous men, on the other hand, one can be fairly certain that timidity did not enter into their composition. Fielding is an obvious instance, Sheridan another—a timid Sheridan is a contradiction in terms. Ursa Major again. "I have no

great timidity in my own disposition," said Johnson to Wyndham, "and am no encourager of it in others." What is timidity? What is the psychology of it? These questions are treated by M. L. Dugas in "La Timidité." You are invited to consider, first of all, the effects of timidity, which are threefold—an awkwardness of the movements, a bemuddling of the mind, and a stupor or paralysis of the whole being. In physiological jargon, it is an inhibition of function, and you may define it as a disorganisation, or imperfect organisation, of acts, thoughts, or emotions, as the case may be. In its extreme type it approaches the malady of the will which the medical dictionaries call agoraphobia, the dread of the crowd, of the gaze of other people. The French call this violent form of timidity *trac* or *peur bleue;* our own idiom has the exact equivalent, "blue funk." All public speakers have known this feeling—even, it is said, the brazen M. Rochefort. Cicero, used as he was to the rostrum, was prevented by "blue funk" from delivering his "Milonian" speech. M. Sarcey, who lectured every week for twenty years, declared he was never able to conquer his timidity. Paillet, a famous Parisian advocate, was so nervous that, he used to say, he half hoped some accident would happen to him in the street on his way to the court, so that he might be prevented from appearing. Veteran actors, when they are worth their salt, seldom get over their "stage-fright."

But this is not the same thing as a constitutional, chronic timidity. That is one of the aspects of impres-

sionability. The impressionable subject is unable to cultivate indifference to others or to believe others indifferent to himself. He has a morbid yearning for sympathy, and is proportionately disconcerted by its absence. The first instinct of the constitutionally timid person is to conceal his embarrassment. Hence he is apt to tell lies—not deliberately, but out of sheer mental confusion. Rousseau is the capital example of this—with his "Je n'ai jamais menti que par timidité"—unless he was lying when he said that, as is not impossible. His explanation, however, was plausible enough. He said that he thought slowly, more slowly than ordinary conversation travels, and was thus driven into talking at random; shame and timidity made him unwilling to retract his silly remarks—obviously the next step was lying. Further, the timid man becomes a solitary, and the solitary becomes a self-analyst and an egoist. With egoism comes a want of balance and proportion. That is the psychological significance of the old curse: *Vae soli!* Sir Willoughby Patterne, with all his arrogance, was essentially *un timide.* Timidity, too, makes the bookworm. It also makes the "bear." M. Dugas notes the various forms which timidity takes in men of intellect, men of action, and emotional men. In the intellectual man, you are apt to find great speculative hardihood combined with a practical timidity. Carlyle's is the typical case. The mere thought of having to order a coat or buy a pair of gloves caused him the most acute discomfort. So Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant had

a sort of ferocious timidity in the practical concerns of life—were what the vulgar call "oddities." "If I am fairly courageous in thought," wrote Renan, "I am in practice timid and cautious to excess." Taine was of the same type. Just as the timidity of intellectual men is of a practical sort, that of men of action is intellectual. Yet it affects their action too, makes it a thing of fits and starts, renders their will "explosive." Timidity makes the emotional man, in the vulgar phrase, "dry up," produces an external coldness and hardness. M. Dugas might, I think, have instanced Prosper Mérimée. And why not Swift?

Is timidity an evil? We must not be in a hurry to answer yes, merely because it means a state of discomfort in the person affected. So far, no doubt, it is an evil; but it may be a necessary evil. Probably if the world had had no *timides* it would have had no art. Art, as Tolstoy insists, is essentially a mode of transmission of feeling. But it is an indirect mode, a veil, as it were, behind which a man reveals his personality. The artist communicates with his fellows not in his own person and face to face with them, but withdrawn from their gaze. This means that he is of the race of the timid. Hear Rousseau: "I should be as fond of society as any one else were I not sure of showing myself in it not merely to my disadvantage, but as quite different from what I really am. The course I have taken in writing and hiding myself was the only one open to me." Virgil, Horace, Benjamin Constant, Michelet, Amiel

were all notably timid men. And, as we saw that timidity leads to meditation and analysis, it enters into the temperament of the philosopher and man of science. *Per contra*, a thoroughly stupid man is seldom timid. Perhaps for the average run of us, timidity is like measles, not a good thing in itself, but nevertheless a good thing to have gone through. The best sort of confidence is that which has conquered, not that which has never known, timidity.

For Men.—"A man must have one good coat," said Colonel Newcome, in excuse for the possession of a famous garment—it was blue, if I remember rightly, with a rolled collar very high in the neck, and some gorgeous brass buttons—which served its owner as a robe of ceremony for some five-and-twenty seasons. But what *is* a "good" coat? What is the criterion of success in man's clothes? These obstinate questionings troubled me the other day at the sight of a casual wayfarer in Fleet Street. He was a very seedy wayfarer, little better than a tramp; he had no collar, his boots were not so much boots as a network of the largest sized meshes. As for his coat it was green with age, the buttons had disappeared from the back, its edges were worn into a fringe. And yet the coat was unmistakable, one felt that it had been a "good" coat; it curved in so gracefully at the waist, there was such elegance in its shoulders; traces of harmonious beauty, of subtle design, of fine distinction

were evident in every line of it. There was something pathetic in the sight, as in any other magnificent ruin or monument of departed glory. Fascinated, my gaze followed that coat—till its owner turned into a public-house.

The æsthetic of male dress is still seeking its great theorist, its Lessing, its Winckelmann. It is easy enough to philosophise, or moralise, about clothes; since Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," any one can do the trick. But the well-dressed man remains, to laugh at the philosophers; an unexplained fact, an undefined element of the cosmos, an enigma of which the key is yet to seek. Attempts are occasionally made to explain him: now and then a newspaper, greatly daring, publishes a column on men's fashions. But what lamentable failures they are! We read that frock-coats will be worn longer than ever this season, that browns will be superseded by greys or stone-blues, that hats will become broader in the brim, that *peau de suède* gloves are "going out." But these are the bare, gross elements of the matter; they leave the quintessence, the true inwardness, of the well-dressed man untouched. Indeed, these newspaper columns on men's dress are so ill done that I sometimes suspect they must be written by women. The ignorance of the whole female sex about man's clothes is something unfathomable, colossal, "gigantesque." Oddly enough, the better dressed the woman, the worse judge she seems to be of good dress in men. Stroll

down Regent Street any day at the crowded hour, and you will see the most exquisite bodices and skirts of Worth and Pingat and Doucet walking quite contentedly and ignorantly (I could almost say, with brutal callousness) arm in arm with absolutely abominable coats, and bowing without shame to top-hats of the last degree of impossibility.

Now, why is it that while men understand all the little niceties of women's dress so well (indeed, these niceties are generally invented by men), women remain so shockingly ignorant of the *nuances* of men's dress? I suppose it is because the object women pursue in their clothes is so different from that of men. The guiding principle of women's dress is beauty. There are subsidiary principles, of course—the desire to eclipse other women, the desire to imitate other women, and so forth—but beauty, I take it, is the governing principle. Woman aims at completing and enhancing in her clothes the agreeable impression produced by her person. To be sure, Jane Austen says her aim is founded upon an illusion. "It would be mortifying to the feelings of many ladies, could they be made to understand how little the heart of man is affected by what is new or costly in their attire; how little it is biassed by the texture of their muslin, and how unsusceptible of peculiar tenderness towards the spotted, the sprigged, the mull, or the jacconet. Woman is fine for her own satisfaction alone" ("Northanger Abbey," chap. x.). Be this as it may, woman's end is satisfaction through beauty. For

this end she has an unlimited choice of means, all stuffs, all colours, all forms. Now whatever the main object of man's dress is, we may be quite certain, I think, that it is not beauty. In the age of the dandies, from Brummell to D'Orsay, this main object, we know, was fantasy, individualism running to sheer eccentricity. But there are no dandies now. No well-dressed man now permits himself any imaginative audacity in costume; even the boldest spirit seldom goes beyond the freak of letting the top button of his overcoat be seen, while the others are concealed. A few men dress fantastically, no doubt, wear sea-green ties with flowing ends, velvet jackets in Piccadilly, and so forth; but nobody supposes these to be well-dressed men; you will find, on inquiry, that they are only Socialists, or Vegetarians, or Esoteric Buddhists.

No; fine art in man's dress, I submit, makes neither for beauty nor for fantasy, but for fitness, appropriateness, an exquisite tact and discretion. Orthodoxy, correctness, the meticulous observance of an unwritten but rigid law make the well-dressed man. He is in the fashion, of course; that is, he wears the colours, the stuffs, that are the "right" colours and stuffs at the moment. But, if that were all, any tailor could turn out well-dressed men by the hundreds—whereas there are innumerable elements in the problem beyond the ken of the mere tailor. There is the barometer, for instance, to be taken into account, and the thermometer, and the time of day, and the place, and the state of political parties, and the

fluctuations of the bank-rate. The well-dressed man is he who knows the right coat for a wet day, a grey day, a sultry day, for Kensington High Street, for Mayfair, for the Stock Exchange, and for the Sandown "special"; what trousers to wear at the Reform, and what at Arthur's; what tie may best be seen under the Achilles statue, and what in the Temple. Here I think man has a more delicate sense of the appropriate *nuances*, of what the three Miss Poles called the Fine Shades, than woman. I have seen an old-gold brocade gown in Bond Street, where it was a thing of sheer joy, and pursued it on the top of an omnibus—*en tout bien, tout honneur*—to the Ship and Turtle in Leadenhall Street, where it became an unpardonable solecism. No well-dressed man could be so dead to all sense of the incongruous as this.

For my part, I shall not consider the æsthetic of men's dress properly worked out until it can be expressed in mathematical formulæ. Something like this, for instance. Let us postulate a mild temperature, a Parliamentary crisis, a little melancholy, a slight attack of dyspepsia, and some tiresome afternoon calls to pay. This (in the mathematical æsthetic of the future) ought to lead to the following equation:—

$$\left(\frac{\text{Temp. M.}}{\text{Crisis P.}} + \frac{\text{Mel.}}{\text{Dys.}}\right) \times \text{Calls} = \frac{\text{D}}{\text{d}} \times \text{p.b} + \frac{\text{W.W.}}{\text{L.G.T.}}$$

Or, in non-mathematical language, a coat of the class D (which reference to a book of rules will show to be

"severe, without excessive sombreness"), trousers to match, patent-leather boots, a white waistcoat, and a light grey tie. But we shall have to wait a long time, I fear, for this æsthetic algebra; for mathematicians never dress well.

Polite Eating.—"He was an ingenious man," says the Colonel in Swift's "Polite Conversation," "that first found out eating and drinking." While all of us may be said to take a direct interest in the invention of that ingenious man, the judicious know how to get an indirect benefit out of it as well by browsing on the literature of the subject. Indeed, if we must play the gourmet it is better to do it on paper; so may we gratify the palate of the imagination with the feasts of Heliogabalus, and yet escape dyspepsia. Let us, then, cherish the books that enable us to be gastronomers after this fashion, to do our eating and drinking as it were vicariously, and to consider what Fielding (in the opening chapter of "Tom Jones") calls "the art of polite eating" as a department of the *belles-lettres.* It is sometimes said that the first Englishman to take up his pen in the cause of philosophic dining was Thomas Walker, of "The Original," published in 1835. I submit, however, that this statement wants qualifying; for before Walker wrote, Thomas Love

Peacock, in his earlier novels, had devoted some very pleasant, scholarly pages to eating and drinking. "Headlong Hall," for instance, with its notable *bon-vivant* Dr. Gaster, is "as good as a feast" in more senses than one; "Melincourt," too, has a great deal to say about the æsthetic of the dinner-table. And there had been some well-informed (if rather too robust) feeding in the "Noctes Ambrosianae" of Professor Wilson. As to the politeness of the eighteenth century in this matter, it is not obvious. Indeed, in No. 195 of the *Spectator*, Addison reproves the barbarous gluttony of the age. "What would the philosopher have said," he asks, "had he been present at the gluttony of a modern meal? Would not he have thought the master of a family mad, and have begged his servants to tie down his hands, had he seen him devour fowl, flesh, and fish, swallow oil and vinegar, wines and spices; throw down salads of twenty different herbs, sauces of an hundred ingredients, confections and fruits of numberless sweets and flavours? For my part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropsies, fevers and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers lying in ambuscade among the dishes." And Addison goes on to advise: "Make your whole repast out of one dish"—now, as then, it is to be feared, rather a counsel of perfection than a practical precept.

One of the liveliest chapters in "Peregrine Pickle" describes, with an implied allusion to contemporary feeding, the feast given by the Doctor "in the manner

of the ancients," with its "boiled goose, served up in a sauce composed of pepper lovage, coriander, mint, rue, anchovies, and oil," its dormouse pie, and its "sow's stomach, filled with a composition of minced pork, hog's brains, eggs, pepper, cloves, garlic, aniseed, ginger, oil, wine, and pickle."

Probably the best account of an eighteenth-century dinner extant is that given in the "Polite Conversation," and any one who is at the pains to piece together the menu from the scattered allusions to it in the dialogue will wonder that the party could have survived such a Gargantuan banquet. Here are the dishes, which I jot down in the order of their appearance on the board: Oysters, sirloin of beef, shoulder of veal, fish, venison pasty, tongue, pigeon, cucumber, soup, black pudding, shoulder of mutton, hare, almond pudding, ham, goose, a rabbit, preserved oranges, and a whole cheese. No wonder Lady Answerall remarks pleasantly that "this eating and drinking takes away a body's stomach!"

The mood of Thackeray when he wrote—

> *Persicos odi puer apparatus,*
> Bring me a chop and a couple of potatoes,

is a very healthy, honest, respectable mood, which many of us adopt from choice, and more from necessity. Let us by all means be cheerfully frugal, and sit down thankfully to the dinner of herbs, where love is. All the same, it is pleasant to feed magnificently now and then, to exchange the daily chop and potatoes for the Persic

apparatus of gleaming silver and fine linen, electric lights in banks of flowers, historic wines and wonderful dishes with fantastic names. It is an experience, if nothing more; it shows you to what a pitch luxury can be brought; it helps you to a right valuation of luxury by knowledge at first hand—saves you from that danger of overestimating it which mere second-hand knowledge, mere hearsay, is apt perhaps to involve. And the reflections that pass through your brain at a long and splendid banquet have what the physicians call an alterative quality: they act on the mind like change of air on the body; you see your fellow-men in an exceptional mood, all genial expansiveness, a little glorified perhaps, a little transfigured, like actors in the glare of the footlights. Men whom you know in morning dress and at their daily toil as rather dull dogs, people with whom you are in the habit of exchanging a curt nod, suddenly become something quite different; they open their hearts, they abound in racy anecdote, in the brilliant fence of talk, in a rich and various philosophy. In a word, life for the moment is strung up above the normal pitch; your pulse beats quicker, your brain is more active, you are really for the time being an abler man.

Commonplace.—It was one of those eminently respectable hotels "For Families and Gentlemen" on the South Coast which are run on the theory that the presence of Scripture texts in the bedrooms makes up for the absence

of chalk in the billiard-room. As soon as I set eyes on it (and noted at a glance how it failed to come up to the magnificent picture of it in the "A B C" guide) I had a dismal foreboding about the menu. The sight of a young and obviously honeymooning couple, a brace of prim old maids, and an odd parson or two in the hall deepened my suspicions. These are just the sort of people who don't know or care what they eat. And when the menu was put before me, I said (among other things) "I knew it!" It mocked me, that bad, banal old menu.

Soup
Cod
Mutton cutlets
Roast chicken
Blanc-mange and stewed rhubarb.

The soup was lukewarm water; the cod, wool covered with Stickphast paste; the mutton cutlets were leather; the chicken was an ancient rooster; as to the stewed rhubarb, why, in the name of Brillat-Savarin, is such a thing ever allowed to appear on the table? Of the wine I have not the courage to speak. You may guess what it was like from the fact that they expected you to drink your hock out of green glasses. Green glasses go with paper "ornaments for your fire-stoves" in my mind—dreadful Middle Victorian things, like Martin Tupper and Frith's pictures and Tom Taylor's plays. Now, to run down, under doctor's orders, to the seaside for change of air, only to find this sort of welcome, leads

to pessimism and suicide. Why is the Art of Polite Eating so absolutely unknown in our English "Family Hotels"?

I take it to be mainly the fault of the old maids. Not that I would be thought wanting in respect for ladies because they happen to be unmarried and of a certain age. On the contrary, I would pay homage to their many virtues. Theirs is the Higher Carelessness of the Theosophists; they can take a dispassionate view of man. But they are too fond of living at hotels. It is for the sake of company, I suppose, and of seeing a little "life." They attack the hotel cod and mutton cutlets with a sense of "going the pace." Stewed rhubarb is a sort of innocent debauch for them. "La joie de vivre, ohé, ohé!" Bless their hearts! It never occurs to them, I suppose, that what is play to them may be death to us. I note that wherever they go the food is always uneatable; even on the Continent (they particularly affect the smaller hotels on the Belgian and Norman coasts) their effect on the cooking is (like the Pirate King's revenge) swift and terrible. I was for long misled about this. I discovered that the worst hotels in Europe are in the towns which have an English resident chaplain; and so I became an enemy to the Church of England. But at length I saw that the English chaplain was only a symptom; he, like the bad cooking, is the consequence of the old maids. And the worst of it is, statistics show that the proportion of unmarried women to the rest of the population is daily

increasing. I foresee an awful future for the world—nothing but cod and mutton cutlets and stewed rhubarb!

Do not tell me that this connection between spinsterhood and bad dinners is only coincidence. It *must* be a case of cause and effect. I turned out a drawer of old menus the other day (I am not a professional collector, but these things accumulate of their own accord), and found I was able to classify them according to the habits of the female population of the countries to which they belonged. For instance, old maids are not allowed to roam about in Spain, at any rate they do not frequent the hotels, and so it was, no doubt, that at the Fonda de Paris, in Valencia, I first learned what a toothsome dish is a fricassee of small and tender frogs. On the other hand, when they gave me a bull-frog of the largest size at the Arlington House, in Washington, D.C., I instinctively divined the presence of the old maid, and, sure enough, there she was—all marble arms, like the First Mrs. Tanqueray. But these menu-wreckers (if I may use the expression in a Pickwickian sense) give such hotels as the Waldorf or the Holland House in New York a wide berth, and the consequence is that the cooking there is a rapturous ecstasy. That is to say, it is rapture for the judicious; the native "dude" is apt to turn it into a riot. I have seen with these eyes—"ce qu'on appelle vu, de mes yeux vu," as Orgon says—a young gentleman breakfast on brook trout, marrow-bones, Perigord pie, and buckwheat cakes with maple sugar, winding up with several mint-juleps

at the bar. This was taking up the White Man's burden by the wrong end. There is good miscellaneous feeding, too, on the Atlantic liners, but one notes a certain tendency to degenerate into the banalities of cod and mutton cutlet. Need I say that there are always old maids on Atlantic liners?

It is in the Near East, the land of Polygamy, where such old maids as exist are carefully kept under lock and key, that the hotel menus are least spoiled by the taint of barbarity. For one thing, both red mullet and woodcock happen to be extremely plentiful in the Levant, and you may safely reckon upon them in nearly every hotel menu. Then the hotel is generally run by an Italian—which naturally means all sorts of pleasing fantasies in the way of macaroni and spaghetti. Probably, too, the cook is a Greek—hence a great variety of pilaus and quaint stuffings of raisins and figs and burnt almonds. Finally, the Italian commercial traveller, who pervades the Levant, makes for culinary righteousness. The Piedmontese bagman (and though he is from Piedmont he knows a good Chianti when he smells it) is by nature a *bon vivant*, a man of taste, and, for that matter, a good fellow all round. True, he winds whole coils of macaroni round him like Leighton's Athlete struggling with a Python, and by the end of dinner he is generally smeared from head to foot with tomato sauce, but these are amiable weaknesses which have to be accepted in a cosmopolitan spirit of indulgence. His conversation is so copious, so racy, so romantic! He

will tell you quaint (but quite unprintable) tales of his successes with dusky Abyssinian beauties, and explain why Mascagni is a greater maestro than Wagner, in the intervals between the courses. Dining at a certain *table d'hôte* with these joyous companions, I was dismayed to see a lady enter and take her seat. Now, thought I, if this lady is putting up at the hotel, good-bye to the romance of cooking, and look out to-morrow for cod and mutton cutlet! But presently, by way of making things pleasant and putting us at our ease, the lady produced a card from her pocket and passed it round the table. It was inscribed—

MLLE. DIANETTE, CHANTEUSE EXCENTRIQUE,
EN TOURNÉE.

I breathed again. Evidently this lady was *not* an old maid.

HOLIDAYS AND FANTASIES

At Eastertide.—How most profitably to keep Eastertide is a question more practical, but hardly less difficult of solution, than the old problem of the schoolmen, How many angels can be made to dance on the point of a needle? Unwilling to waste the first Bank Holiday of the year, most of us are conscious of a vague impulse to "go somewhere." Wherever that may be, we are apt to find that nearly everybody of our acquaintance has fixed upon the same destination. For we are all *brebis de Panurge*, as Rabelais knew, and the imitative instinct is especially strong in us at holiday times. The seductive itineraries put forth in the railway companies' advertisements tempt us out of London only to find ourselves—whether it be at Brighton or on the boulevards at Antwerp or the Hague—among a crowd of fellow Londoners. Many people do not object to carrying the metropolis with them in this way. They will breakfast at La Pérouse or Foyot's none the less joyously because a party of their neighbours from Hampstead or Kensington

is breakfasting at the very next table. The more fastidious holiday-maker who desires change of company as well as of scene must shun the beaten track. After all, now as ever, the best means of enjoying a solitary holiday is to go afoot. Only that way are our Surrey commons and field-paths to be properly known. "Give me the clear blue sky over my head," wrote Hazlitt in his delightful essay "On Going a Journey," "and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy." At Eastertide the holiday-maker who tries Hazlitt's plan must be prepared for mud. But he will be compensated by finding that the rain has turned the countryside into a picture of vernal beauty. Everywhere the landscape has been touched to life. The wayside elms have "thickened" into that preliminary stage of brown leafage which many amateurs prefer to the full greenery later on, because the delicate tracery of branch and twig is still left clear against the sky. The daffodils are not yet over, the "rathe primrose" is beginning to line the woodland paths, and the hedgerows are white with the blossom of the sloe. In the garden, nature is still more forward. The more sheltered rose-trees are almost in full leaf. Warm south walls are pink with the bloom of the peach. The cheerful whir-r-r of the grass-cutter begins to be heard on the lawns. Golf-greens have ceased to be marshes, and the pits of the "bunkers"

are no longer ponds, though the ground—at any rate on the London clay—is a little too damp for perfect comfort. The ball is apt to fall with a dull thud, and the caddies have their work cut out to keep the "irons" clean. But at Eastertide the wily golfer hies him away from the London clay to the short sandy turf or chalk of Seaford and the Devil's Dyke, Southwold, and Felixstowe. There could not be better weather for golf—though no weather can be said to be exactly bad for that accommodating pastime.

At Easter, as at other seasons, the old doubt recurs: whether a holiday may not be most luxuriously enjoyed at home. There is a famous paper of Thackeray's on the delights of staying in London when all one's friends and neighbours leave it. You can have the morning room of your club to yourself, and can read the *Vie Parisienne* without danger of interruption from the bald-headed seniors who are generally found fighting for the possession of that austere periodical. But it requires some intrepidity to face the club servants on Easter Monday, and as it is ten to one your study at home is dismantled for "spring cleaning," you had better perhaps quit the town with the rest of your kind—unless you stay in bed, a simple and inexpensive mode of recuperation much recommended by the faculty to jaded brain-workers. Between the sheets you may betake yourself to what Renan was fond of calling an "examination of conscience." This—in bed or out of it—was Dr. Johnson's constant practice at Easter. "I have

made no reformation," is the gloomy entry in his "Meditations" on one of these occasions; "I have lived totally useless, more sensual in thought, and more addicted to wine and meat." The *tables d'hôte* of innumerable seaside hotels will find many people, not so scrupulous as Johnson, addicted to wine and meat at Eastertide. That is their way of communing with mother Nature. So it was Hazlitt's. "Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion; to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties; to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweetbreads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening; and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than the gentleman in the parlour!"

But in whatever way we take our holiday, the one thing needful is that we take it in true holiday mood. For the time being we must be content to regard life as a spectacle, something in which we ourselves are only remotely concerned. We must divest ourselves of the Schopenhauerian will-to-live, and contemplate the universe as a Kantean pure idea. Undoubtedly we shall do that the more easily if we cross the Channel. The little red-trousered soldiers who saunter out to meet the boat at the pier-head, the "Calvary" at the summit of the cliff, the clop-clop of the fishwives' sabots along the cobble-stoned causeway, the unfamiliar language—every-

thing will help us to the desired illusion that we are for the moment not participants in life, but disinterested spectators of it.

Out of my country and myself I go,

is the poet's quaint statement of a subtle truth. The few hours that are needed to take us to Bruges or Dieppe will have carried us much farther than any distance marked on the map; we shall be in the *pays des rêves*, having left our workaday selves behind and put on a new man. The philosopher's *cogito ergo sum* will then have acquired a new corollary. Ceasing—temporarily—to think, we shall cease to be. That is the sovereign virtue of the true holiday mood.

At Midsummer.—The butchers' shops are filled with the large blue flies celebrated in the "Rejected Addresses," ice in the champagne cooler is no longer covered by the "table money" at your club, and all sorts and conditions of men in London have with one accord thrust their heads into straw hats—the hardest, the prickliest, and, I am convinced, the very hottest of head-gear. Perhaps the most salutary result of summer temperature is the conversion of an ordinary over-busy and over-bustling world to the philosophy of shirt-sleeves. A spell of severe heat cries an imperative Halt! to the most incorrigibly restless of us. Tennis becomes a mockery, golf an outrage, and cycling a peculiarly malignant form of torture. Hot weather deals a

swingeing blow at that deep-rooted superstition of our race—physical exercise. It is not easy to trace this folly to its source. Bacon would have you go as far back as Celsus, who, he asserts, prescribed "sitting and exercise, but rather exercise"—wherein you see the superstition in the making, and, as it were, not quite sure of its own mind. Dryden declared that it was—

> Better to hunt in Fields for Health unbought,
> Than fee the Doctor for a nauseous Draught;
> The Wise for Cure on Exercise depend—

and that notorious humbug, Eustace Budgell, quoted the lines with approval in the *Spectator*. But it is on record that Dryden, despite his athleticism on paper, spent his time in an arm-chair in Wills's. Another notorious humbug, Lord Chesterfield, wrote: "You should never suffer your son to be idle one minute. I do not call play, of which he ought to have a good share, idleness; but I mean sitting still in a chair in total inaction; it makes boys lazy and indolent." In the Dog Days "sitting still in a chair in total inaction" ceases to be a weakness, and is raised to the dignity of a hygienic precaution. Even in cooler weather we believe that it might more frequently be practised with advantage. It is said that exercise clears the brain; it more often benumbs it. History abounds with examples of great men the secret of whose greatness, beyond all reasonable doubt, is that they took no form of exercise. There is the instance of Sam Johnson,

who, says Boswell, even as a schoolboy, "never joined with the other boys in their ordinary diversions; his only amusement was in winter, when he took a pleasure in being drawn upon the ice by a boy bare-footed, who pulled him along by a garter fixed round him; no very easy operation, as his size was remarkably large. His defective sight, indeed, prevented him from enjoying the common sports; and he once pleasantly remarked, how wonderfully well he continued to be idle without them." Boswell, with his usual impudence, calls this a "dismal inertness of disposition"—Boswell, whose favourite form of exercise, as a certain mock-writ testified, was *adhaerere pavimento!* For my part, I can conceive no more joyous adventure than to be drawn along by a garter. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

But, of course, the classic example of literary eminence achieved under—I believe it might be said, in consequence of—a deliberate policy of abstention from all exercise is that of Macaulay. "During an epoch when, at our principal seats of education, athletic pursuits are regarded as a leading object of existence rather than as a means of health and recreation, it requires some boldness," says Sir George Trevelyan, "to confess that Macaulay was utterly destitute of bodily accomplishments, and that he viewed his deficiencies with supreme indifference. He could neither swim nor row, nor drive, nor skate, nor shoot. He seldom crossed a saddle, and never willingly. When in attendance at Windsor as a Cabinet Minister he was informed that a horse was at

his disposal. 'If Her Majesty wishes to see me ride,' he said, 'she must order out an elephant.'" Macaulay himself attributed a great part of his literary success to his inveterate habit of dreaming day-dreams—as good a form of exercise, to my thinking, as the average amateur's golf, and (unless, to be sure, you happen to be Alnaschar) much less expensive. The inference is irresistible. If a man will only pursue steadfastly the policy of avoiding every kind of active exercise, will never walk beyond a saunter, and never walk at all if he can take an omnibus or a hansom, he stands a chance of writing a brilliant (if partisan) History of England, and becoming a Cabinet Minister into the bargain. And even should he fall a little short of these achievements, he will probably have the satisfaction of enjoying as much health as your athlete and your sportsman.

Another statesman besides Macaulay, and a live one this time, affords a striking refutation of the current theory as to the necessity for exercise. I refer to Mr. Chamberlain, who—it is matter of common knowledge—has never learnt any outdoor game, eschews all forms of sport, and takes no exercise whatever. And withal he is probably the most youthful-looking man for his age in the House of Commons, "fit," *frais et dispos*, so that many a trained athlete would envy him his perfect "condition"—to say nothing, of course, of his intellectual alertness. The curious investigator, indeed, could very soon compile a notable list among our living Parliamentarians—a list including such diverse personalities as

Lord Salisbury and Mr. Labouchere—of men who have apparently found it "easy and even helpful" to do without physical exercise, whether in the form of games or of field sports. The moral (especially for the hot weather) is: Throw away your dumb-bells, sit still, and listen to the band in the gardens.

If you must wander about, then let your itinerary be "a mighty maze without a plan." Avoid time-tables. Go to the nearest station, ask for the names of half a dozen places within an easy journey, and toss up a coin to decide which of them shall be your destination. Take no luggage. Buy your clean linen as you go along, and have what you take off sent home by parcel post. I know one man who, reading George Sand's letters from Venice, felt that he must visit Italy forthwith, and walked straight out of the house bound on that journey. A quarter of an hour later he returned; he had forgotten his hat. Ultimately he departed with no other luggage than a rare fourteenth-century illuminated manuscript, wrapped up in an old newspaper. I suspect him of designing, when his money gave out, to bribe innkeepers by a sight of the precious manuscript. Needless to say he was a poet—but he had the true instinct of the holiday-maker. Gérard de Nerval was a famous traveller of this *impromptu* type. He started from Paris with just forty francs in his pocket for Constantinople—and got there, too. He learnt how to travel economically from professional tramps. When he returned to Paris his friends locked him up as a

lunatic. But I hold that in the matter of holiday-trips he was brilliantly sane. . . .

When you reach a place afoot, do not ask its name, let the imagination go to work without names, it will play all the more freely. To wander across country till you strike some little hamlet, to lunch at the inn, to peep into the church, and to be off again in scrupulous ignorance of what place it is you have visited, is a whole romance in itself. George Borrow knew something of this, one may be sure, from his persistent trick of withholding names of places and persons in his books. Thus in "The Romany Rye" he describes Salisbury without once mentioning its name, calling it always "the city with the spire." And what mysterious interest gathers round his personages, "the Publisher," the "Man in Black," merely from the fact that they are never more definitely described! It is this quality of anonymity, I think, which gives so strange, so weird a charm to the vague recollections of our earliest childhood. For thirty years and more I was able to look back with wondering curiosity upon a scene I witnessed when I was a very tiny boy. There was a vast, cheering multitude surrounding a bearded man in a carriage who wore a fur cap. As the crowd surged round the carriage, others on the outskirts amused themselves by throwing bags of flour at their neighbours. This scene burnt itself into my childish brain, so that all my life I could call it up at will, and I was never tired of wondering what was the key to the mystery. Then one day happening to

look into a book of memoirs, I found the key, and my little private mystery was a mystery no longer. The man in the fur cap was Garibaldi being driven in triumph along the Strand, and the people with the bags of flour were King's College students. I wish I had never looked into that book of memoirs.

Afterwards.—Once upon a time there was an Oxford Don who had been accustomed every morning of his life to eat a new-laid egg for breakfast. The seasons might pass, Governments change, coaches be superseded by railways, and gas by the electric light, but the Don always ate that egg. One day the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and offered him all the kingdoms of the earth or the immediate joys of Paradise (I forget which) if he would forego his new-laid egg for only one morning. Never was so high a price offered for a new-laid egg. The Don looked at the Archangel and then at the egg, but finally, with a shake of the head, replied, "Non est tanti." What is the moral of this story? That we should not break with a long-established custom, even at the bidding of an Archangel. "Therefore," says Francis Bacon in his Essay "Of Custome and Education," "since custome is the principall magistrate of man's life, let men by all meanes endevour to obtaine good customes."

The common task, the daily round, is a custom, and a good custom. It is good because we have grown up in it, and grown to it; it is part of ourselves, an ele-

ment in our character, the soil in which the roots of our being are fixed and whence they draw their nourishment. Are we wise to tamper with it? I ask myself the question after every trip abroad. I have had to change my language, my food, my drink, my tobacco, my usual style of clothing, my hours of sleeping and waking, my topics of conversation, the very current of my thoughts — everything, in short, to which I am accustomed, everything that goes to make up my normal, recognisable self. Is it, in the colloquial phrase, good enough? And I am tempted to answer, with the Oxford Don, "Non est tanti."

To begin with, the mere physical exertion of the thing is intolerably irksome. You stand, one of a long row of fellow-travellers, all elbows, irritation, and packages (with sharp corners, which hurt) at a ticket office, you struggle for a carriage, you are not improbably seasick, you cannot sleep in a strange bed, you have to start for the next place by the next train at an uncanny hour. If you are on the sea-shore you have to bathe, which means undressing and dressing — one of the miseries of life at all times. Then somebody expects you to walk, somebody else to drive. Betweenwhiles it is your duty to go out botanising or shrimping or inspecting picture galleries or penetrating into the crypts of churches. All this is an exhausting toil. You need not be much of a philologist to remember that travel is the same word as travail. In one day of foreign travel there is more severely athletic exercise than in a round

of eighteen holes at golf, a game of billiards with a thousand up, or a course of Turkish baths. To a sedentary man all this is horrible.

But the mental aspect of the thing is even worse than the physical. Here your breach with custom is appalling. You lose all consciousness of your own identity; you do, in fact, for the time being become somebody else. This is partly caused by your unfamiliarity with a foreign language. You have to say not what you mean, but what you can. Your conversation with your fellow-creatures is not conditioned by your ideas but by your vocabulary. You are bursting with reflections on the eternal verities and the philosophy of the absolute, and all you can say (intelligibly) is "pass the mustard" or "two absinthes and a soda split." But by degrees your ideas become as limited as your language. All the ordinary stimulants upon which, unconsciously, you depend for your intellectual well-being—the newspapers, the reviews, the chatter at the club—are absent, and you feel like Crusoe on his Island, with all the world to begin over again; you have, as it were, to fashion yourself a home-made intellectual equipment out of goat skins and a few articles saved from the wreck. So you are gradually reduced to imbecility. You even forget the rudiments of your own business. At home I am accustomed to review plays. But when I am abroad I cannot exercise the critical faculty, even over a Punch and Judy show. I have sat out the most inept and childish performances, entertainments by

fifth-rate conjurers, bad plays by worse strolling players, and I have accepted the enthusiastic comments of the unsophisticated burgesses on either side of me without a murmur. I have become a mere country cousin in the pit. The mind is its own place, said Milton. I respectfully dissent. I declare I have no mind, to speak of, when I am removed from the ordinary environment in which my mind works.

Of certain other miseries of holiday-making in foreign parts—lost luggage, quarrels with the Custom House, damp sheets, and so forth—I forbear to speak. These things are too ghastly for print. The upshot of it all is the firm resolve (regularly made and as regularly broken any time these twenty years past) that I will never travel again. Once more I comfort myself with the wise words of St. Thomas à Kempis in Book I. chap. xx. of the "Imitation": "What can you see elsewhere that you do not see where you are? Behold the sky, the earth, the elements. Out of these everything is made. Wherever you may go, what will you see that is stable under the sun? You think, maybe, to have your fill of the world; but you never will. Were you to see everything that is in it at once, what were it but an empty vision?"

In Surrey

Giles and the Moujik.—The other morning I found my friend Giles putting up a new fence round the Forty-Acre meadow, and more than usually inclined to expatiate upon the hardships of his lot. Though the meadow belongs to the most noble and puissant seigneur, the Marquis of Carabas, Giles is no retainer of the marquis's; he belongs body (very old and wrinkled) and soul (possibly non-existent—for Giles never goes to church) to a skinflint farmer, the marquis's tenant. Having no soul, or next to none, Giles is naturally not much given to introspection; he is very little concerned about what M. Paul Bourget would call his *états d'âme.* In vain have I tried to lure Giles into the paths of self-analysis; on the psychology of the Ego, Giles cannot be induced to hold forth. On the other hand, he is very prolix, not to say diffuse, on the subject of his wages. Now that his granddaughter has been reading to him (Giles can neither read nor write) a newspaper correspondence on "Village Life," he has more to say on the great wage

question than ever. It seems that, as an extra hand, he only gets half-a-crown a day from the skinflint farmer, and in the present harvest-time a little beer, which, he complains, is half water. Elsewhere in Surrey three shillings a day is the wage and "honest" beer. The deficient sixpence and the diluted beer, between them, have turned Giles to pessimism. The skinflint farmer, too, whose corn-sheaves have been standing upside down, rotting in the rain, is another pessimist. We are all pessimists in "Our Village."

Except the Village Idiot—whose persistent cheerfulness is simply maddening. Four times a day he passes my window, taking his cattle from the farm to the pasturage—the village idiot is a cowherd by profession—and always with the same fixed smile, the sempiternal smile of the fashionable physician "with a good bedside manner" or of the *prima donna assoluta.* I had always supposed that the village idiot was one of the conventional fictions of melodrama. You know the idiot of melodrama? He was invented, I believe, by Pixérécourt and perfected by Adolphe D'Ennery. He lives on the mountain-side. He is dumb. In the second act he is the unseen witness of the murder at the old Toll-house. In the next two acts he pervades the stage, making frantic but incomprehensible gestures, and gibbers to slow music. But in the fifth act, just as the wrong man is going to be sentenced to death, he recovers his speech and his wits, and etc. etc. Well, I have discovered, much to my astonishment, that there

are village idiots in real life. Ours, as I have said, is also the village optimist. And he drives cows—is in fact quite a pluralist. But my reminiscences of the stage are too much for me. I cannot help a dreadful suspicion that he will one day give up driving his cows past my window, and, recovering his wits, denounce the whole of our hapless villagers for a series of hitherto unsuspected, but bloody, murders. Perhaps the consciousness of having us all under his thumb in this way is the secret of his optimism? Time alone will show. Meanwhile he has taken a wife and, I grieve to say, begotten children. There will be no lack of village idiots in our countryside.

Our peasantry, idiots and all, and ill-paid, ill-fed though they are, bear themselves proudly. Here and there an oldster will greet you with a touch of the hat and "Rough weather, sir," but the lads only stare, and the girls never curtsey. Walking over the South Downs the other day I met two little Sussex maidens who honoured me, as a stranger, with the old-fashioned "bob"; but here in Surrey genuflection is evidently considered *vieux jeu*. The near neighbourhood of London doubtless accounts for this. It accounts for many other things, *e.g.* for the absence of folk-music. The old rustic songs which you get in Mr. Thomas Hardy's novels, and which may still be sung in Mr. Hardy's Wessex, are never heard here. When our villagers are turned out of the White Hart, at ten o'clock, they go home singing scraps of ancient music-hall songs, "Hi-tiddly-hi-ti" and "You wink the other eye." The effect of these once popular

metropolitan ditties, with a provincial pronunciation, is not pleasing. "Hoi-tiddly-hoi-toi"—no! decidedly, 'Arryism in a smock-frock (a pure figure of speech, for here we have no smock-frocks) does not recommend itself to a fastidious taste.

What a strange contrast are these Surrey villagers to the Russian peasantry of Tolstoy! There is "The Power of Darkness," a terrible picture of lust, brutality, infanticide, among the Russian peasantry—a companion piece to Zola's "La Terre." The scene in which Nikita digs a pit in the cellar, takes his new-born child, puts it under a plank, and squeezes it to death by sitting down, is one of the most horrible nightmares in literature. "How its little bones cracked under me—crack—crack," wails the wretched Nikita. He drinks glass after glass of brandy, but still he hears the child crying, and its bones going crack—crack! And so do I—Ugh! "The Fruits of Enlightenment" shows one a very different side of the Russian peasant. He now comes in as "comic interest," as part of a deputation from his native commune to his liege lord, at Moscow, confused by the wonders of the big city, made to wipe his feet in the hall, disinfected by order of the lady of the house, hustled away into the kitchen—a blundering, patient, dumb creature, more sheep than human being. Indeed, these peasants are more pathetic than comic in their naïve candour, their mysticism, their painful attempts to be articulate, to understand what is going on around them. Being sheep, they move naturally in flocks, and

are so driven. Here, for instance, you have the stage direction for their entrance :—

[*The peasants enter, bringing as presents, rolled up in handkerchiefs, sweet Easter loaves, eggs, towels. They look around for an icon before which to cross themselves. Seeing none, they turn their faces towards the staircase and make the sign of the cross.*]

And here the direction for their exit—short and significant :—

[Gregory *chucks them out.*]

I have been trying to comfort my friend Giles by showing him how much better off he is than the *moujik*. Indeed, I have essayed to convince him that he is better off than myself. Putting up a fence is monotonous work, and it tires the muscles, but there is no anxiety about it. Giles knows that he will be able to finish his day's work, whereas the scribbler never knows whether he will be able to get through his. Field labourers (even with their beer diluted by skinflint farmers) are happier—*sua si bona norint.*

Valmont.—The Normans assiduously devote themselves to the art of minding their own business. Their great questions are: Whether the thunder-storms have caused much damage in the cornfields and whether the Curé will have two collections or three at the grand service on the Feast of the Assumption. The French villager cares about nothing in the world save the little concerns of his village.

I am convinced that all through the centuries he has never cared for any other mortal thing. The great "mundane movement" has gone on, history has been continually repeating itself, there have been Revolutions, Reigns of Terror, Restorations; but the French villager has steadily held aloof and (the author of "Candide" knew what he was writing about) "cultivated his garden." His womenkind are even more conservative than he. They wear garments of the fashion which their ancestresses wore when men in armour were fighting at Cressy and Agincourt. Do you know Bastien-Lepage's

picture of Joan of Arc? He has dressed the Maid, in her orchard at Domrémy, in the very garb which you may see to-day (half) covering every village girl in France—a low (dirty) white bodice over a slate-grey skirt, worsted stockings, and sabots. These peasants bring home to one the continuity of the race. We townspeople have abandoned armour for velvet, and velvet for wig and knee-breeches, and wig and knee-breeches for top-hat and frock-coat. But the French villager has not modified a single detail of his costume. The mere sight of him is a sort of archæological debauch. One of Mr. George Moore's people in "Evelyn Innes" cannot visit Paris without thinking of Balzac. For my part, I cannot dissociate Normandy from Froissart. I feel inclined to interlard my conversation with "Oncques ne vis" and "ores chevaucha" and "moult."

And so it seems quite natural to me to find myself reading this inscription:

Ci gist haut et puissant seigneur Nicole sires D'Estouteville,
lequel en son vivat fonda cette pnte
Abbaye en l'an de grace 1116, et trépassa le xxii
Jour d'Avril Mil Cent et xl.

It is on a tomb in the Abbey of Valmont, some few miles inland from Fécamp—Fécamp, as "Charley's Aunt" would say, "where the Benedictine comes from." And Valmont itself was a Benedictine establishment. The abbey appears to have been once sacked by the English—but, for that matter, there is not a dilapidation

in all Normandy that is not put down by the natives to the English. In any case, the ruins one sees now cannot be the result of any English sacking, for they are obviously Renaissance, and cannot date further back than the close of the fifteenth century.

Ruined abbeys are common enough. What is uncommon is to find, in the midst of ruins, a chapel preserved intact. And that is the surprise reserved for you at Valmont. You wander down a nave flanked by broken ivy-clad columns, with the aisles here and there roughly boarded in, so as to serve as stables. Everything seems dead and deserted. Then a door is unlocked—and you are suddenly plunged into a stream of multi-coloured light pouring down from stained glass upon figures in marble and alabaster as clear in outline and crisp to the touch as though they had been carved yesterday.

This little chapel of Valmont is a masterpiece of delicate grace, of something like feminine coquetry in architecture. Its chief jewel is the altar-piece—attributed by tradition to Germain Pilon—which gives you in stone the Renaissance idea of the Assumption. The Virgin is on her knees with hands joined on a book which she has just been reading. The Archangel Gabriel—with true French gallantry—is on his knees too. But the choicest thing is the background, with its canopied bedstead, its high, elaborate chimney-piece, and its carpenter's bench—vice, tweezers, plane, shavings, and all. On the floor is the Virgin's work-basket, filled

with balls of worsted. It is a charming "domestic interior."

On the altar itself is a gruesome relic—the heart of one of the D'Estoutevilles in a thin leaden covering moulded to its shape. They say that when this case was discovered beneath the floor of the chapel some years ago it had a fissure from which a sort of greyish-red powder was escaping. A D'Estouteville fell at Hastings. Somehow, that fact seems to make an English visitor seem quite at home in Valmont. The place boasts other attractions than the abbey—a château (also "sacked by the English") and an ancient hostelry. On a hot August afternoon all the inhabitants seem asleep. Grass is growing in the market-place. The local "coiffeur" stands unoccupied at his shop-door, yawning and evidently marvelling at the energetic curiosity of the visitors. The town must be now pretty much what it was before the abbey and the château had been sacked by the English. For my part, I should scarcely be surprised to see Nicolas, Sire d'Estouteville, stalking across the market-place in full armour. As for the Dreyfus case, I don't believe a single inhabitant of Valmont has even heard of it.

Crete.—We glide silently, almost furtively, into Suda Bay at midnight, over an oil-smooth sea, and under a moon of burnished copper. The coast is merely a vague, dark mass, but here and there are bright splashes which a glass shows to be beacon fires, and we can plainly see the lights of Canea—a long, low line of them, not at all unlike the Margate lights as seen from the end of the jetty. At the farther end of the bay lies the fleet, every vessel outlined by electric lamps from stem to stern. Wish-h-h goes our signal rocket; it is answered from the fleet by another, which falls in a brilliant red shower, and I begin to think that the whole affair is one of Messrs. Brock's entertainments. Presently a steam-pinnace creeps out from the darkness, and describing a sharp curve, shoots neatly up alongside our gangway; a young lieutenant steps on board with "British Navy" writ large all over him. After a brisk salute to the French officers of our steamer and a brief glance round for the captain, whom he fails to discover (for the

excellent reason that the captain has not chosen to leave the bridge), he says abruptly—addressing the world in general—"I want the mails." And he gets them. Also he gets something the British Navy had not bargained for—a lady with a maid, a pet dog, and six dress-boxes. Why this lady has come to Crete no one precisely knows; but she is a dashing sportswoman, and we all have a vague idea she is doing it for a wager. The lieutenant explains that there is absolutely no accommodation for a lady at Suda Bay, but our sportswoman nevertheless persuades him to land her. And so the British Navy, the steam-pinnace, the embarrassed lieutenant, the sportswoman, maid, dog, and dress-boxes vanish into the night, and we glide out of Suda Bay as silently as we stole in. The impression left on my mind by this midnight call is that Crete is only some fantastic dream, a Whistler Nocturne, or a Kinematograph without the music. But there is waking, solid reality in the fact (which we learn from the lieutenant) that the Turks have all been packed off. It is our first bit of news of the outer world since we left Marseilles.

Athens.—Twelve hours' steaming from Suda Bay brings us to the Piræus. But long before our arrival there, at a distance of some eight or nine miles, I should say—though distances in this marvellously clear atmosphere are generally much greater than one supposes—I have been able through the glass to make out a little white building on a low hill. That hill is the Acropolis

and the little white building is the Parthenon. I suppose matter-of-fact people will think it absurd, but the first glimpse of these places gives one a strange thrill. They seemed to belong to one's schooldays, to history, to legend, to poetry—and lo! there they are, in very fact, at the other end of my field-glass! We reach the Piræus at two, and our steamer is to start again at five. I set down these hours with precision, because thereby hangs a tale. The problem before us is how to "do" Athens and the Acropolis in the time. There is a half-hourly train service from the Piræus, and the journey takes twenty minutes. Evidently it will be a close shave. In one of the boats that swarm round the vessel as she steams into the narrow harbour, we catch sight of a Cook's agent. We give him a nod; and in a trice he is on board, has settled to manage the trip for us, and to bring us successfully back to the ship. He proves to be a Greek, with a fluent command of English, an inexhaustible knowledge of historic Athens, and that courtesy, tact, and resource which (they say) Cook's agents in this part of the world never fail to exhibit. People whisper ill-natured things of the Greeks, but I shall in future turn a deaf ear to them, after my experience of this one admirable specimen of the race. At first our enterprise seems like to meet with a check. It appears that it is St. Demetrius his day, and on that day the Athenian cabman, it seems, insists on unreasonable fares. Long do we stand in Concordia Square and shout "Amaxá!" (as Londoners would

shout "Hansom!") in vain; but at length an "amaxá" consents to abandon his scruples about St. Demetrius, and we say "Parthenon," as unconcernedly as though we were saying "Victoria Station." Off we go up Stadion Street, past the very tiny House of Representatives, into Constitution Square. Here "a gentleman of the company" (I prefer to take refuge in Boswell's formula) insists upon wasting precious time at a confectioner's, just because some one has told him that they make excellent sweetmeats in Athens. Cook's agent looks nervously at his watch, while the gentleman vaguely wonders what is the modern Greek for "marrons glacés," and, while still wondering, is dragged off by the rest of the party, who prefer the Acropolis to sweetmeats.

The first impression of Athens—dust. It is as dusty as some of the purlieus of Chicago. The cactuses which line the road from the sea look like artificial cactuses of tin, painted dust-colour. The pepper-trees which fringe the city squares are grey with dust. The red oleanders in the gardens are all dusty and shabby. Everything in the modern city strikes one at a first hasty glance (I "hedge," because a better acquaintance might give one a wholly different impression) as dusty and shabby. Even the Ilissus—Heavens! fancy driving in a cab across the Ilissus of the Platonic Dialogues!—is only a dusty track in a dry bed. . . . As we trot past the Temple of Jupiter our "amaxá" suddenly rises and doffs his hat to a passing carriage. Its occupant, a gentleman in a scarlet and gold forage-cap, is the

Crown Prince. . . . Again our faithful guide looks anxiously at his watch, and is obdurate when I beg him to let us stop for a moment to inspect the Theatre of Dionysus. Here were all my hopes of constructing an entirely new theory of the Greek drama shattered by a Cook's agent! Up we went, at a gallop, to the very foot of the Parthenon; clambered over the steps; caught a glimpse of the blue sea and Ægina in the distance; panted round the Temple of Nike (the neatest bit of architecture on the Acropolis to my mind—like some delicate toy temple); rushed across to see the Erechtheum, with the Caryatides, which have been so absurdly imitated in the porch of St. Pancras Church; made a bee-line for the Temple of Theseus (the best preserved thing in Athens); had forcibly to restrain the "gentleman of the company" already mentioned from stopping at another confectioner's; caught a train for the Piræus by half a second—and arrived at the water's edge to find all the boatmen wildly gesticulating and shouting something at which our guide's face fell. "Your steamer has started." Pleasant news for a party of travellers who hadn't so much as a suit of pyjamas among them! The "gentleman of the company" was consoled by the thought that he could now linger at the confectioner's in peace—but the inexorable Cook's agent bundled him and his companions into a boat. The men at the oars rowed "like mad," and the steamer was reached, after all, just as they were about to raise the gangway. The face of the captain on the bridge

wore a grim expression. I secretly fell to wondering whether passengers who were late for their steamer were liable to be put in irons. But I felt that fate could not harm me that day. I had stormed the Acropolis.

The Melancholy of Constantinople.—Mark Tapley could be cheerful in the City of Eden. But he had not tried Constantinople. And in any case, Tapleyism is not true to life; for it would involve the maintenance of one mood in all places, an impossible—and if it were possible, then a stupid—achievement. Places have their appropriate mood, and to miss the appropriate mood is an irreparable misfortune. For the local "sights" can be seen at second hand in sketches and photographs. Even the local dish can probably be had elsewhere in hermetically-sealed tins. You need not travel to Moscow to know the outlines of the Kremlin, nor is a pilgrimage to Strassburg essential in order to taste *foie gras*. But the local mood is only to be felt on the spot. No doubt there are people whose memory is chiefly visual, whose experience is one continuous series of what Victor Hugo called *choses vues*, and to travellers of this temper places can be little more than external aspects. For myself, I confess I can only recall cities to my mind as this dominant mood or that. New York means a querulous restlessness; Chicago a forlorn disgust; Richmond in Virginia a mere animal somnolence. Who can deny that our London streets, even at their

grimiest, have a brisk and cheerful air? Merely to look upon the Place de la Concorde is to enjoy a sudden exhilaration of spirit. In the Cannebière at Marseilles you are a little confused by the hubbub, and feel like a grave elder in a nursery of noisy children. To be sure, there are vague, colourless cities which have no local mood—places like Havre or Lille—and for all I care they might be expunged from the map. They mean nothing to me—nothing, that is, more than "dix minutes d'arrêt" and a rush to the "buffet."

About the local mood, however, of Constantinople there should be no possibility of mistake. It will come to you slowly, perhaps, but surely. At first this strangeness of the East merely bewilders. The busy crowd thronging the old bridge between Galata and Stamboul; the unfamiliar costumes and babel of tongues; the infinite variety of the colour-scheme, from the carpets of the bazaars and the shifting lights on mosque and minaret to the sweetmeats at Hadji Bekir's and the dye-powders which women use for their finger-nails; the reckless traffic; the sea of mud; the multitude of soldiery; the universal fez and goloshes of the men, the "bunchy" mystery of the women—all these external things at first reduce the mind to helpless confusion. You are in a merely receptive state, you cannot yet take stock of your feelings. But when the novelty has worn off and you have learned to discriminate, when your multitude of feelings in solution have been precipitated into a mood, you become gradually aware that it is a mood of vague

sadness. Constantinople, you discover, is *au fond* a melancholy city.

To account for a mood is never an easy task. It is of the essence of a mood to be indefinite; it belongs to the region of what the psychologists have taken to calling our subconsciousness. And so I cannot pretend to say precisely why my dominant impression of Constantinople is one of melancholy. One reason, however, I think I do perceive. It is a city wherein death is constantly brought home to you. The dead elbow the living in a queer, matter-of-fact, casual fashion. From the window at which I am writing, looking in the direction of the Golden Horn, I see what at first I took to be mere waste ground, a piece of no-man's-land not yet seized by the builder; but here and there, standing or fallen on their backs, or, it may be, broken in pieces, are little stone posts surmounted by sculptured turbans. They are gravestones, and the place is really a disused burial-ground. Even in the courtyard of a house in a main street you may chance upon one of these stones, protected in that case by railings. Pera would seem to have been built on one vast cemetery. At every step you pass groves and clumps of the dark, forbidding cypress. Among the tombs sheep graze, dogs prowl, beggars squat, every kind of rubbish is shot. I do not conclude that the Turks have no reverence for their dead—a mere tourist, I am not competent to form an opinion on a fundamental point like that—but I do say that their reverence does not take the same form as

ours. And in any case the outcome is melancholy. The cypress is a melancholy tree. Neglected—not to say, from a Western standpoint, desecrated—graves fill the mind with melancholy. Master Matthew in Ben Jonson's play asked for a stool "to be melancholy upon." He would have found the very thing he wanted in one of these Pera gravestones.

What makes matters worse is that the dead are allowed to elbow the living before as well as after sepulture. It has been my fate to encounter three funeral processions —two Greek, the third Turkish—in one day. I only hope I may never encounter a Greek funeral again. The body is borne outside the coffin, and the spectacle of a corpse clothed in an artisan's ordinary dress, with its yellow face staring up at the sky, and a gag of cotton wool in its mouth, is a little too nightmarish for my taste. The second body was that of a little fair-haired child—the sort of thing that gives a man a gulp in the throat. As for the Turks, they do at least cover the bodies of their dead, but the crowd presses with indecent unconcern round the coffin; there are fresh volunteer bearers at every step—for, it seems, this duty is believed to procure remission of sins—and, altogether, there is a plentiful lack of reverent solemnity. I suppose the burial customs of any people are among the oldest part of its heritage. One cannot change these things. Here death and life hobnob familiarly, and no one seems in the least surprised or shocked. But I begin to understand why Constantinople weighs upon me as a melancholy city.

Then there are the dogs. Every one has heard of the scavenger dogs of Constantinople, whose home is the street, and whose food is the refuse thrown out from the houses at night. The copybook commonplace that "the dog is the friend of man" is simply not true in Constantinople. These dogs are friendless. No one pats them or speaks to them, no child plays with them, no one throws a stick for them to retrieve. And yet they are very decent, well-behaved brutes. It is significant that they cower if you bend over them. And there seems to me to be a dumb reproach in their eyes, a despairing longing for the human sympathy and companionship which they never get. This may be a sentimental delusion on my part; but, delusion or not, it tends to deepen for me the melancholy impression of Constantinople.

Another factor, I think, is the infrequent presence of women in the shops and streets. A Turkish woman, being merely a yashmak, a bundle of shot-silk, and a Sairey Gamp umbrella, hardly counts. There are a certain number of Levantine ladies, of course, but somehow they do not suffice to make the streets bright and cheerful. One misses the little army of shopping ladies and children, and the auxiliary forces of trim, neat shopwomen, who make up the pleasant, chattering, smiling bustle of Paris and London. You do not realise how woman contributes to the amenity of life by her mere presence, the mere colour and fantasy of her costume, the mere babble of her tongue and ripple of

her laugh, until you sojourn in a country where she is kept as much as possible out of sight. . . . One could go on to other causes of gloom, such as the stolid silence of the men, the air which so many quarters of the city have of falling into decay, the shabby, provincial aspect of the shops, the insufficient lighting of the streets, the absence of the vast excited crowds which in other great cities pour in and out of theatres at night. You may say that, to make the list quite complete, the traveller would probably have to throw in his own nostalgia. But that would carry us too far. I have not proposed to explore the full content of a personal mood, but merely to analyse that part of it which is due to locality. My analysis may be defective, but about the local mood I have no doubt. Constantinople is a city of melancholy musing.

Dancing Dervishes.—Not far from the upper end of the funicular railway connecting Pera with Galata is a low white building with lattice windows, courtyard, and fountain, where a very singular performance is to be seen by the curious between the hours of one and two P.M. every Friday. It is the *tekkeh* or monastery of the whirling dervishes. At the door you deposit your goloshes, for which (in exchange for the usual baksheesh) you receive a check from the attendant, just as though it were the cloak-room of a London theatre. But why, I think I can hear you interrupt, why, oh why, goloshes? Does any Englishman venture to wear goloshes,

since the days of "The Private Secretary"? Not in England, I daresay; but in Constantinople he cannot help himself. And when you see the Constantinople mud you very soon understand the reason why. Here every mortal man wears goloshes. And the fashion has one great convenience within doors, not to speak of its obvious advantage without. In theory you cannot enter a sacred building save by taking off your shoes; in practice you simply take off your goloshes. Do you remember Thackeray's picture of Mr. Frederick Minchin taking off his clogs in "Mrs. Perkins's Ball"? You can see that picture, or something very like it, at every mosque door in Stamboul. At St. Sophia, by the way, they are not satisfied with the removal of your goloshes; you are expected to put on loose bath slippers with which they provide you. To wear these loose slippers over your boots is not easy to the unpractised, and I'm afraid I toboganed rather wildly over the sacred floor of St. Sophia. But at the dervishes' *tekkeh* the slippers are dispensed with.

Mounting a side staircase you first find yourself in a gallery looking down on an octagonal floor—well waxed and polished, obviously a first-rate dancing floor. Round the floor is a barrier, beyond which sit the general public. Within the barrier squat a dozen figures, with their heads on their knees, apparently asleep. They wear an elongated fez of light-brown camel's hair, and are wrapped in loose cloaks of varying hues, blue, sage green, purple, and cinnamon. A little apart from them, on a mat of

honour, the chief dervish sits cross-legged, with a green veil round his fez to denote pilgrimage to Mecca. They are all silent, and look as if they were in a state of catalepsy. Then a curious noise breaks forth at your elbow, and you perceive that there is an orchestra in the gallery. It consists of flutes and a percussive instrument which is neither a drum nor a tom-tom, but half-way between the two. The musicians (dervishes like the rest) strike up a tune which at first seems to you to be mere noise, but in the end proves by no means unpleasant to the ear. It is a plaintive, wailing undulation of sound, pitched in a shrill key; the thin notes rise and fall, grow louder and softer, sometimes burst into spasms of excitement, then die away *pianissimo*. And it is a peculiarly hypnotising sound; it seems to lull the mind to sleep, or at least to somnolent reverie. I can fancy that Hindu snake-charmers might play this tune on their flutes.

At a slight change in the melody the dervishes rise, throw off their mantles, and begin a slow march round the edge of the floor. Each one, as he passes the chief, bends his head with hands crossed on his breast and receives what looks like a stage kiss—I mean, of course, a kiss in the air. It is an elaborate ritual which must require much practice. Each dervish, after receiving his kiss, has to pivot quickly round and face the dervish immediately following him. The manœuvre is executed with a stately grace; indeed, these dervishes might give lessons in "deportment" to Mr. Turveydrop himself. For one thing, they are never in a hurry. The proces-

sion round the hall is repeated three times, until you begin to yawn and to wonder when the whirling is to begin. But you are to remember that this is a religious ceremony, and in no way a theatrical performance, and so there is no help for it but to sit out the duller details of the "service" with what patience you can command.

Now the orchestra accompanies its flutes with a wild sort of chant, a nasal droning chant, which appears to be the signal to the dervishes below that for whirling there is no time like the present. It is evidently the dervish idea of "l'invitation à la valse." And you remark that the holy men are admirably dressed for dancing—a short vest of blue cashmere, a sash, and a long accordion-pleated skirt. One by one they start on their twirling, with arms poised aloft from the shoulder, the hands slightly drooping—an attitude not without elegance. Their bare feet move noiselessly over the parquet. Gradually they increase the pace, till their skirts stand out almost straight from the waist. The rising and falling of the skirt as the movement quickens or slackens present precisely the same suave outlines of gauzy drapery as in our own stage skirt-dance. Æsthetically considered, Loie Fuller and a dancing dervish are one and the same thing. Nor is this the only association with the theatre. It is quite evident that the dervishes have a stage-manager. Those who are in the outer ring whirl more rapidly than those in the inner ring, and the dervish at the very centre hardly moves at all. This, of course, produces a regular geometrical figure,

and a clear rhythm—Mme. Katti Lanner could not arrange it more scientifically. And there is one dervish, not a dancer, who threads his way through the throng, watching the weaker brethren and stamping lightly with his foot as a signal that this man or that is getting out of line.

The sole objection to the dancing dervishes is that there is a little too much of them. They whirl and whirl and whirl—till you think they will never stop. And when at length they do stop it is only to pause for breath. Refreshed by two minutes' rest and reinvigorated by another stage kiss from the chief, they start again, and you have the whole performance *da capo*. You see pearls of sweat starting from their brows, their eyes are closed, their heads fall towards one shoulder—but still they whirl. The orchestra has now stopped, and there is nothing to break the dead silence but the *frou-frou* of the whirling skirts. What is strange is that they show not the slightest sign of giddiness. When they have—at last—done whirling they make a low obeisance to the chief, and make it as steadily as though they had not been converting themselves into human teetotums for half an hour by the clock. Ultimately they resume their cloaks and file out in solemn silence. Thereupon the general public makes a wild rush for its goloshes, and I go away feeling that I have seen something which has fairly puzzled me. About the religious ecstasy of the dervishes there can be no doubt; evidently they whirl from the holiest motives. And yet they admit the public

(with a cloak-room fee) as though they were running a theatrical show. This looks like making the best of both worlds. . . . But I give it up. Any attempt to fathom the Oriental mind only takes you out of your depth. And after all, as the gentleman says in "Francillon," "nous sommes tous comiques."

Italians at Smyrna.—A generation ago Italian (with a small alloy of Greek) was the *lingua franca* of Smyrna and the Asiatic Levant. Even now, a slight knowledge of Italian, as the French say, "spoils nothing." The other day I lost myself in the Bazaar—the Maze at Hampton Court is a pattern of simplicity compared with the Smyrna Bazaar—and inquired my way of a most authentic Turk, who, finding I understood neither his own language nor Smyrniot Greek, resorted promptly to a bastard Italian. At our *table d'hôte* you might fancy yourself in Italy. At Constantinople you could count on native dishes, the succulent pilaffe, for example, and that airy nothing which has for local habitation a rolled cabbage-leaf and for name the pleasant one of "dolma." In his wilder flights the chef would venture on a Hungarian "goulache" or even a "plumpouding." Here every plate is flanked by a pot-bellied flask of Chianti, and some of us, I suspect, would like to eat our spaghetti with our fingers. The truth is we are most of us commercial travellers from Piedmont and pride ourselves on the near prospect of ousting the Manchester cotton trade from the Levant

But our mercantile ardour gives itself a respite after the Chianti and spaghetti and we pine for an evening's honest amusement. In our open-hearted Italian way we bewail the lack of it aloud. We cannot, like the placid Turk, content ourselves with the amber bulb of a narghilé and a game of tric-trac for pistachio nuts. We know not the philosophy of "kief." We must have the fine arts, and sally forth to the theatre, the only theatre, the "Théâtre du Sporting-Club," where the bill gives promise of music. "'Bohème,' Opera in 4 atti del Maestro Puccini," is to be given at a quarter-past nine sharp, by an Italian troupe. Apparently the Levant is dependent for its music upon Italian strollers. There are three companies of them, I learn, "on the road," one at Cairo, another at Athens, and this one at the Sporting-Club Theatre, Smyrna. The prices satisfy our frugal Italian mind. For the modest sum of ten piastres you can have a very comfortable stall—the comfort of it I assume from the label on the back, "Anglo-Oriental Co-operative Supply, Limited," to be due to English enterprise. We are allowed to find our seats for ourselves, there is no distribution of playbills, and the curtain is hideous with advertisements of London insurance companies. The audience consists of a handful of Turkish officers, the whole crew of an Italian training ship moored in the bay, and a sprinkling of civilians in morning dress. But I am forgetting the Smyrniot ladies, and that is inexcusable, for the Smyrniot ladies are very much in evidence. They dress well, rather too well;

they cultivate a fantasy in hats which outriots the Rue de la Paix. Evidently there is wealth in Smyrna, and evidently it is the ladies who have the spending of it. But after the sombre dresses in muddy Constantinople, and the shapeless bundles which are supposed somewhere in their inmost recesses to conceal a Turkish woman, one is quite ready to forgive a little extra finery on the ladies of Smyrna. The hideous yashmak is rarely to be seen. This, by the way, is only one of the many advantages which Smyrna offers over Constantinople. It has a bay which is more beautiful than any corner of the Bosphorus. It enjoys a climate which *is* a climate. And it possesses a Governor, the ex-Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha, who is one of the most enlightened and just men in Turkey.

But I am straying from "Bohème," del Maestro Puccini. Murger's story has been used quite as tenderly as it deserves, but Italian ideas of 1840 Parisian costumes would appear to be somewhat "mixed." The short tight pantaloons are all right, but bowler hats are perhaps a slight error. Fortunately the tenor has a voice, and knows how to use it. He is a mere lad, evidently still in his teens, and apparently under the impression that Rodolphe is a comic character. At the most pathetic moment of the play he smiles and nods at his friends in the front row. Nevertheless, the Sporting-Club audience applauds him wildly. The actress who plays Mimi—with a face strangely like Eleonora Duse's—is a real artist. Even when the

stage-snow amid which she is shivering falls in flakes as big as the Sunday edition of a New York newspaper, she contrives to hold the house and to check a titter. For that matter, as snow is only seen in Smyrna about once in ten years, the property-man's error may stand excused. The Marcel and Musette, if not exactly good, are by no means bad. As to the orchestra, it gets a prodigious amount of music out of a couple of fiddles, a horn, a flute, and a drum. The fact is, these Italians have a supreme gift for "making the thing go." Stendhal said the most enjoyable performance of Shakespeare he had ever seen was by a troupe of Italian strolling players in a barn. These Italian strollers at Smyrna have views about Murger which would probably startle the Comédie Française; but the root of the matter is in them, they know how to "make the thing go." And when one considers how they vary their repertory—they give "Ruy Blas," "Bohème," and "Lucia" in a single week—the wonder is that they should manage half so well as they do.

When the performance is over—half an hour after midnight—the cafés along the quay are still open. The placid Turk is still smoking his narghilé and playing tric-trac. And my friends the Italian commercial travellers fall to discussing the opera and its theme. The inevitable question is started. Is Bohemia a thing of the past? By Bacchus, no, and shoulders are shrugged to the ears. What? Have we not all been students once, in the brave days of old, before we took

to pushing our cheap Italian cotton goods in the Bazaars of the Levant? But Mimi—I object timidly—and Musette? Were these ladies ever real types? Probably I am piqued into this scepticism because a lamentably impossible person in Maestro Puccini's opera, who is the butt of the whole cast, is labelled—simply, as though it explained everything—"Inglese." The romantic faith of my Italian friends, however, is not to be shaken. They roll a languishing eye, they hum little snatches of Mimi's songs with vibrant emotion. Mimi? Musette? Ah! in their young days, before they went into the cotton business. . . .

Salonica.—Is not Tourgeneff always described in the biographies as "un doux géant"? The phrase came into my head as I sat down to table with the captain of the *Lazareff*, one of the innumerable Russian steamers which may be met with anywhere in the Levant between Alexandria and Odessa. This gentle giant was a Russian to the backbone. He mildly declared his detestation of English policy. To be sure he did not know what it was — but the incomprehensibility of it only proved the more conclusively that it was directed against Russia. Yet he couldn't help liking Englishmen—especially when the Englishmen were Scotchmen. Scratch a Scot, he thought, and you find a Russian. He liked their form of vodka, which is called, in full, "Onemorespecialpleasemiss," but cared little for the national dish, known as "aminegs." These names

he could vouch for, because he had sojourned in Glasgow and Dumbarton. Nevertheless, as a patriot, he could not help rejoicing that the English army had been soundly drubbed—"joliment rossée"—by the Abyssinians under Menelik. This disaster to the English arms had, it appeared, taken place shortly before Adowah. The gentle giant was not to be argued out of this conviction. I took a little more caviare, and let the drubbing pass. Clearly, it was a necessary myth, and, for that matter, were we not at the very moment breathing a notoriously mythopœic atmosphere? For we were steaming into the Gulf of Salonica, leaving Pelion away on the south-west, and passing first Ossa and then the towering snow-clad Olympus. The ancient legend, by the way, blundered sadly in piling Pelion on Ossa; for Pelion is "dumpy" and Ossa has a sharp peak. The "piling" must rather have resembled the modern conjurer's trick of balancing a billiard ball on the point of a cue. The "piling" process ought to have been done, as Tweedledee says, "contrariwise."

I can see Olympus from my window. It dominates the bay, and takes on an infinity of hues as the day waxes and wanes, a cool grey in the morning, barely distinguishable from the sky, then blue to purple—always tipped with white—then a delicate flush of salmon pink in the sunset. And as I watch these colours blending and melting—like the tints in a Loie Fuller "flame dance"—a curious half-startling, half-soothing ululation

falls on the ear. It is the muezzin. Between all the history that Olympus implies, and all that the presence of the muezzin involves, what has not Salonica seen? Alexander and Augustus, Cicero and St. Paul! The mere aspect of the town is a curious medley of historical incongruities. Within a stone's throw of the white Venetian tower, which once guarded the port, you pass along the old Via Egnatia under a Roman triumphal arch. Once upon a time a party of learned antiquarians came from the uttermost parts of the earth to inspect and measure and admire this arch. The Turkish Governor took note of the fact. Evidently a monument in which so many respectable Franks took this strange interest must be worth preserving. Accordingly, he had it thoroughly repaired and daubed with the best plaster. Doubtless he is still wondering why the Franks have not sent him a decoration for his pains. Fortunately, Turkish vandalism does not often take the form of "restoration." Hard by the triumphal arch is a mosque which can have altered but little since, two thousand years ago, it was a Pagan temple. Before we are admitted the *hoja* (if that is the way you spell the name for the guardian) puts slippers over our boots. This convention varies oddly from mosque to mosque. At St. Sophia, as I have said, you are made to flounder about in slippers far too big for you. With the dancing dervishes in Pera etiquette is satisfied if you leave your goloshes at the door. Here in Salonica, at another mosque—once the basilica—of St. Demetrius, you

are merely asked to wipe your boots and not to walk on the carpet. This basilica, with its *verde antico* columns, is as good in its way as anything in the, of course, far more famous St. Sophia. Every year pious Greek pilgrims come to worship at the tomb of their martyred saint, Demetrius, and are allowed to take away a little earth from beneath the marble slab. The supply of earth is understood to be miraculously renewed. I will not say that the *hoja* winked when he told us this, but it appeared that he kept a garden. Also he was a collector of autographs. This mania seems to lurk in the queerest corners! For the *hoja* —when he was not a *hoja*—was a dervish. Here, then, in the autograph-hunting mania one finds the one touch of nature which makes a Macedonian dervish and a New England school-marm kin.

Salonica is a town of slums, with an exceptionally squalid bazaar, and a pervading odour of fish. They say an English M.P. has obtained a concession for the electric lighting of the place. It is too fierce a light for Salonica, whose beauty is decidedly of the kind which requires "candles, with pink shades." There is, however, one good boulevard, and—of course—the usual varied assortment of grave yards. As for the male population, it consists mainly of some fifty thousand replicas of Sir Henry Irving as Shylock. They have all borrowed his sash, his furred gaberdine, and his complete "make-up." These are the descendants of Jews who fled from the Spanish Inquisition, and,

whether it be the result of in-breeding or of some other cause, they are all alike. No doubt they know one another, and perhaps a practised resident can tell them—just as a shepherd can tell his flock—apart. Their womenkind wear a remarkable uniform, which might have a certain charm—if worn by people of a different shape. It may be said to consist, chiefly, of décolletage—no corset—and a green satin door-knocker at the back of the head. Feminine vanity takes the form of competition in the size of the door-knocker. It is not a vision of perfect beauty—but, at any rate, it is better than a yashmak.

The truth is that women of all races and creeds in Turkey have given up trying to wear attractive clothes out of sheer despair at the unapproachable gorgeousness of the cavass. A cavass in full uniform "defies competition." I happened to be present at Constantinople at the semi-official farewell to M. Cambon, the departing French Ambassador. The central figure on the railway platform, towering above ambassadors and putting the mere military into the shade, was a splendid creature in dazzling scarlet. It was the First Cavass of the British Embassy. Sometimes the cavass affects the Albanian costume—short braided jacket, jaunty cap, and stiff white ballet-dancer petticoat. I instinctively looked to see these gentlemen pirouette on their toes. The cavass is notoriously—and pardonably—vain. It is not only that he is conscious of a costume; he remembers that he was once a janissary. Hence he goes

armed to the teeth, even though it be only to carry his mistress's lap-dog. If we ever introduce the cavass into London—and why not?—in the affections of the nursemaids he will prove a formidable rival to Policeman X and Dandy Dan the Lifeguardsman. And he is as useful as he is ornamental. The protection of a cavass gets you through the Customs with hardly the opening of a hat-box, knocks twenty-five per cent off the sum by which you are cheated in the bazaars, and even keeps the irrepressible little Jewish shoeblacks from running at your heels. His dignified port, though it at first abashes, at last stimulates and fortifies you. You feel that you are taking part in a procession, and that now or never is the time for your demeanour to be noted by the reporters as "affable." This is the cavass frame of mind. And to think that you can enjoy the harmless exaltation for "the ridiculous sum" of a few piastres!

Budapest.—Where do Orient and Occident meet? This obstinate questioning of an invisible thing "intrigued" me, as the French say, all the way up from Salonica. My starting point was plainly Orient, the land of the fez, of baggy breeches, of veiled women, of *rahat lokoum*, of the perpetual cigarette, of the steadfast purpose never to do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow. My destination—Vienna—was, as plainly, Occident. Where should I cross the boundary between the two regions? I have a morbid passion for sharp

divisions. "Distinguo, distinguamus, shall be my motto whenever I apply to the Heralds' College for a coat of arms. Unfortunately, human institutions and the very face of the earth obstinately decline to gratify this passion of mine. Though I gazed long and searchingly out of the carriage window, I saw no line of cleavage distinctly marked—no finger-posts inscribed "Orient to the Right," "Occident to the Left." There were even mean attempts on the part of the Balkan populations to cheat and mislead me. At the Custom House, for instance, on the Servian frontier, the officials wore flat round caps and tight frock-coats—evidently pretending to be Russians. But it was a hollow sham. I found that the institution of baksheesh still flourished here in a fashion unmistakably Oriental. In Turkey they call the Servians by a very uncivil name. I will not print it. But it is a great satisfaction to me to say it over to myself with vicious emphasis—when I remember how the Servian Customs officers turned out the (blameless) contents of my portmanteau and scrutinised my passport with an air of regarding it as a clumsy forgery. Plainly this was still the Orient. Not till you get to the Hungarian frontier at Zimony do you begin to recognise the dawn of Western civilisation—in the shape of a restaurant-car, and the sudden appearance of "pale ale" in the list of beverages. But the pale ale is sold for a price which shows it to be an exotic drink—something mysterious, brought from distant lands, and proportionately costly. You are still in the Orient. As

the railway skirts the Danube (or is it the Theiss?—geographers must decide) you see that the village churches haven't yet made up their minds whether they shall be topped by spires or domes—whether, in fact, they shall be churches or mosques. They split the difference, and present a dome terminating in a little peak—effectually bewildering the traveller on the watch for the moment when he shall pass from East to West.

But at Budapest all doubt vanished. Here it is that Orient and Occident meet. Buda is an Oriental town; cross the Danube by the suspension bridge to Pest, and you are in as Occidental a city as Paris itself—with electric tramcars, underground railway, and comic papers, all complete. The tall hat—blessed, if ugly, symbol!—reigns supreme. And yet if this is the Occident on the surface, it is still the Orient in grain. The barbaric splendour of the costumes worn by hotel porters and domestics, the ceremonious salaams and long-winded sentences with which these domestics greet you, the Byzantine colouring of cathedral and Parliament house—these little things suffice to show the trail of the Turk. Take another most significant detail. They have started a ladies' club in Budapest. A ladies' club is the very finest flower of Western culture, is it not? A passage communicates between this club and the ordinary (or men's) club to which it is affiliated—but the communication is all in one direction. The men may pass into the ladies' quarters, but the ladies may not pass into the men's. Isn't that a thoroughly Oriental idea?

"We sometimes call them *les autres chiens*," sweetly said a charming Hungarian lady. She would not have hurt a fly, I am sure, but she did not shrink from a pun at the expense of the dear "Autrichiens." "You know, we only speak German to dogs and cabmen," was another genial remark of a Magyar. On the other hand, your Viennese friends will raise a polite eyebrow when you confess to having found the comforts of civilisation at Budapest. They affect to regard you as a traveller from Siberia or the North Pole. Hungary is to them what all London beyond Hyde Park was to Lord Foppington—a desert. "These queer semi-Oriental peoples" they shrug, and invite you to "hear a little music" after the barbaric din of the Tziganes. There must be something more than racial antipathy here. Propinquity has much to answer for. "It is certain if a man hates at all, he will hate his next neighbour." One was reminded of Johnson when he went down to Plymouth, and found the people there up in arms against the inhabitants of the new and rising Devonport. With the sportsman's instinct the Doctor took sides. "I am against the *dockers!* Rogues! I am a Plymouth man." And so at Budapest I found it expedient to be against the Viennese. Rogues! And, for the first time in my life, I rejoiced that I had never had the courage to learn the German irregular verbs. In a few years' time German will be a dead language in Budapest. It has even been banished from the corners of the streets. Not so long ago correspondents used to

communicate with me from "Dorothea-gasse"; I observe that they now inhabit "Dorottya-utcza." In Vienna when you wish to annoy your neighbour you call him a Jew; in Budapest you call him an Austrian. If they are good haters, the Hungarians are equally warm friends. They are enthusiastic Anglophils. I have heard of a very insignificant Englishman, a mere private tourist, who was gratified by the strains of "God Save the Queen" when he sat down to supper at the famous Hôtel Hungaria. He looked round for royalty, and was terrified to find that the conquering hero of the occasion was none other than himself. He was an Englishman, and that, it seemed, was enough—for a Tzigane orchestra. Perhaps, by the way, there is a little too much Tzigane orchestra in Hungary. At meals your request for the salt is drowned by the mad strains of the czardas. If your train stops at a wayside station for five minutes—lo! there are Tziganes to strike up on the platform. No Danube steamer is complete without its Tziganes. And if it were only Tzigane music! More often than not they insist on playing "The Jewel of Asia" and "A Bicycle made for Two." Then one begins to think that, after all, there is something to be said for the Viennese.

On the whole, however, I am convinced that Johnson was wrong. One ought to be neither "Plymouth man" nor "docker." To take sides is to forego the real charm of travel. Travelling abroad offers us our one chance of converting the world into pure spectacle. The

peoples of the earth then figure merely as a stage crowd. An army ceases to be an army and becomes something which may reasonably be expected at any moment to oblige with a "Soldier's Chorus" or a "Bénédiction des Poignards." A bustling street moves you to applause, affecting you like some cunningly-contrived kinematograph. For your pleasure is really æsthetic; your mood has the element which, they say, marks all artistic feeling —disinterestedness. Hazlitt puts this well. "There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as to our friends." It was, of course, of pedestrian travel that Hazlitt was writing, your true romantic way of it. Though we are all much indebted to the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits which carries us swiftly over Europe, from north to south, from east to west, in hotels on wheels, the company, I fear, has done much to spoil the romance of travel. Amid the luxury of dining-cars and smoking-rooms and coupé-lits we have no time to look out of window. Lyons or Nuremberg becomes merely a point at which we reach our third course on the menu. Perhaps your best chance of getting the scenic, the spectacular, pleasure of travel is in the Mediterranean, at such a point, say, as the Straits of Messina. An hour or two ago you were out of sight of land. Now you are passing within a

mile of the shore. A glass shows you the sentries pacing on the ramparts, or the fishermen of Reggio spreading their nets in the sun. As you glide silently by, you see a little corner of Italian life, without taking part in it. In another hour the scene has faded away —it has been "an animated but a momentary hallucination."

This is to take travel as a substitute for *haschisch.* For that mood you must not go to Pest. The place is too ostentatiously civilised, too "go-ahead," too completely equipped with "electric bells and hot and cold water on every floor," to be a place for dreamers. In width and symmetry the Pest boulevards outparis Paris. Both St. Louis, Mo., and Washington, D.C., pride themselves on possessing the smartest electric tramcars in the world; theirs are ramshackle shandrydans to the cars of Pest. The city has an underground electric railway, compared with which anything of the kind yet attempted in London is contemptible. Not even the Manhattan Club at New York is so gorgeous as the Pest Casino Club. The Viennese are proud of their Ring and their Prater; but only Viennese prejudice could set these before the Andrássy-út and the Park in the rival city. Indeed, one wonders whether Pest is not a little ahead of its own requirements. Where is the population to fill streets so wide and cars so numerous? Does the Diet need quite so gorgeous a Parliament House? One naturally suspects some Hungarian Haussmann to be at the bottom of so much civic extravagance. But it seems there's "no sich

a person." The desire for a splendid city, a municipal policy regardless of expense, has been universal. . . . London looks more grimy than ever, by comparison. Nevertheless, it is not in the Andrássy-út, but at Charing Cross, that "the full tide of life" is to be found. And it is comforting to feel oneself in a hansom again.

Flush.—On Tuesday morning, September 2, 1846, he took a cab from No. 50 Wimpole Street to Vere Street, whither he was driven by way of Bond Street. Mark the circuitous route; there is something sinister in that, and ominous, at any rate something more than meets the eye. Ostensibly, it points merely to the cabman's desire to make more than a shilling fare of it; but if Sherlock Holmes had been alive then (it was many years later that he took up his residence in the neighbouring Baker Street) he would, I feel sure, have convicted the cabman of *being in the secret*. Be that as it may, Flush was "shadowed" up Bond Street into Vere Street by a member (or members) of a mysterious Camorra, known vaguely, but grandiosely, as "the Society" (just as Dr. Johnson's Club was "the" Club). He went into a shop; in due time he emerged—and then he vanished, vanished utterly. To a superficial eye Vere Street was the same; the great mundane movement still went on there; but there was no Flush. He had

disappeared like Waring. *Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit.* And as the ladies, his late companions, returned to Wimpole Street in the fatal cab, one of them, Miss Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, looked white, and tried to find comfort in the thought that when she should be at Pisa with her Robert Browning she would be away from the London dog-stealers; while the other lady, Miss Arabel Barrett, more practical in temper, remarked that the dog might certainly be recovered for ten pounds at most.

Now Flush was no common dog. This, perhaps, is a grovelling understatement. Of course, the dogs of literary anecdote—Sir Isaac Newton's, Sir Walter Scott's, Byron's, Carlyle's—never are common dogs. But Flush was enormously uncommon; egregious, as Mr. Henley would say. He must have had Intimations of Immortality in Early Puppyhood. For he gave up barking at himself in the glass long before "the critics" abandoned that futile practice. "Critics who bark the loudest," writes E. B. B. to R. B., "commonly bark at their own shadow in the glass, as my Flush used to do long and loud, before he gained experience and learnt the *gnothi seauton* in the apparition of the brown dog with the glittering dilating eyes." Unfortunately, his pedigree is not forthcoming. Indeed, there is a lurking fear that he never had one; that he was not, in the Faubourg St. Germain sense, *né.* Ladies, especially poetesses, have the royal right of waiving these considerations; just as a Doña Maria may overlook the lack

of birth in a Ruy Blas. But if Flush had not the genealogy, he had all the instincts of a courtier; was, in fact, one of nature's noblemen. It is not at random that I have compared him with Ruy Blas; for E. B. B. declares that with her he was "sublime"—which is your right Hugoesque quality.

The record of his sublimity merits quotation in full. "You would laugh to see me at my dinner—Flush and me—Flush placing in me such an heroic confidence, that, after he has cast one discriminating glance on the plate, and, in the case of 'chicken,' wagged his tail with an emphasis, ... he goes off to the sofa, shuts his eyes, and allows a full quarter of an hour to pass before he returns to take his share. Did you ever hear of a dog before who did not persecute one with beseeching eyes at meal-times? And, remember, this is not the effect of *discipline*. Also if another than myself happens to take coffee or break bread in the room here, he teases straightway with eyes and paws, . . . teases like a common dog, and is put out of the door before he can be quieted by scolding. But with *me* he is sublime!" It seems, too, that when he was not a Ruy Blas he was an Autolycus. For, "moreover, he has been a very useful dog in his time (in the point of capacity), causing to disappear supererogatory dinners and impossible breakfasts which, to do him justice, is a feat accomplished without an objection on his side, always." Mark the significance of "in his time"; it establishes the interesting fact that Flush was no longer in his first youth.

There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and Flush took it when he passed from E. B. B. to R. B. To what precise *part* of R. B. he passed the Browning correspondence showeth not. But, doubtless, it was a soft part, for his mistress writes: "He did not hurt you, really? You will forgive him for me? The truth is that he hates all unpetticoated people." As a petticoat would have saved R. B., the inference as to the point of attack is obvious. Apparently it was R. B.'s umbrella that had annoyed Flush. "It is not savageness," says his mistress pathetically. All the same, the bitten poet, with all his delicate sympathy, could not conceal his satisfaction when Flush had his ears slapped. Here I find what is perhaps the most human touch in the whole correspondence. Long before this incident R. B. had ventured to allude to the animal as "even Flush." "You know," he writes, "what even Flush is to me through you." 'Twas a case of Love me Love my Dog, if ever there was one. But, as we have seen, Flush "got even" with the poet in quite another sense.

So much for Flush's career previous to the historic 2nd of September. We left him.

. . . . dans ce sac dont Scapin l'enveloppe.

The name, however, of the miscreant, the man with the bag, was, as you might expect, not Scapin, but plain Taylor, and he lived down Whitechapel way. The apparition of this Taylor throws a lurid light of Balzac

across the page. He has a touch of the magnificent mystery of Vautrin. In Vere Street he is a common dog-stealer, a mere man with a bag; but in his home in Whitechapel he is a sort of Pirate King, the chief of a Confederacy who make three or four thousand a year by their honourable employment. Interviewed by a respectable footman from No. 50 Wimpole Street, he is found "smoking a cigar in a room with pictures"—early Landseers, no doubt. He negotiates like a Minister Plenipotentiary of the First Class. Ten pounds—or the dog's head shall be sent to E. B. B. in a basket. R. B. clearly would prefer the dog's head. On principle, he says, the principle of defying all dog-stealers to do their worst. But *we* know why. Then Taylor—he has now become "the archfiend, Taylor"—cedes a point: "they (*i.e.* the Confederacy, Les Treize) would accept six pounds, six guineas, with half a guinea for himself, considering the trouble of the mediation." I confess that, from a man like Taylor, the mention of this paltry half-guinea pains me. It suggests that archfiends "are cheap to-day." Taylor-Vautrin, Taylor the diplomat and virtuoso, Taylor who had seemed at one moment descended from the great Condottieri of the Renaissance, ought to have bargained for one of E. B. B.'s sonnets in the original MS. and crushed morocco.

But in one respect the Robber Chief was faithful to the great romantic tradition; he had a chieftainess, a worthy mate. Mrs. Taylor reminds me of Helen

Macgregor. Tracked to her native heath in Whitechapel by E. B. B. (and a timid maid), Mrs. Taylor revealed herself as "an immense feminine bandit . . . . fat enough to have had an easy conscience all her life." She had a gracious smile. She poised her head to the right and left with the most easy grace. Also, "She was sure that Taylor would give his very best attention." And the timid maid thought they were all going to be murdered. Indeed, Taylor did become truculent. One of the Barrett family called him names, whereupon, with reiterated oaths, he swore "as he hoped to be saved, we should never see our dog again." Taylor is now complete. Another touch would ruin the picture. He hopes to be saved! I forgive him that half-guinea.

Last scene in this stirring tragi-comedy. Exit Taylor, and re-enter Flush—at eight P.M. on September 6, 1846 (arriving simultaneously with one of R. B.'s letters)—dirty, much thinner, and (the sad result of Taylorian example) continually drinking. Total expenses: twenty guineas.

On Changing Clubs.—For eleven months out of the twelve we are all fairly happy at the Junior—as happy as men ever can be at a club. Truth to tell, men never are deliriously happy at a club. I am naturally reluctant to give my sex away; but it is just as well that the ladies should be disabused of one of their most obstinate errors. If they could only see how very glum mankind can be in its clubs, they would save us a good deal of

domestic unpleasantness. If they could but peep into the morning-room or the library and see the chilling inscription, SILENCE, in large letters over the mantelpiece, they would recognise a club for what it is, an ascetic retreat, a place of penitence, the desert abode of anchorites. If they could only come into the coffee-room and see Brown (reputed to be a millionaire, on the strength of his shabby hats) dining off the lean of a mutton-chop and a bottle of potash, they would know that a club is the temple of self-denial, of maceration of the flesh. It is time the ladies learnt these things—though the knowledge may mean the final overthrow of our masculine supremacy, already tottering to its fall. It is time they knew that one member never accosts another to whom he has not been introduced. It is no wonder that—like the illustrious "Bertie"—we "look sad." We are thinking of our absent wives and absent womenkind generally, and gloomily recognising that the separation of the sexes is a mistake. I once took a frivolous French friend to the Junior. He looked round with an affrighted gaze on the miscellaneous collection of seedy coats and trousers there assembled, and, exclaiming "Ça manque de femmes," incontinently fled. There is the whole matter in a nutshell. Ça manque de femmes.

But in the absence of these charmers we do what we can to "carry on the system of life"—as Dr. Johnson said—at the Junior. We borrow one another's umbrellas without asking leave, and try to persuade ourselves that

the sixpenny cigars are nearly as good as those you can buy at the Stores for fourpence. But we are rather proud of our youth—which we parade in various ways. Some of us wear knickerbockers on Saturday mornings, and ostentatiously leave golf-clubs in the hall. Others sport coloured waistcoats with brass buttons—flights of fancy which would frighten any one but a young man out of his senses. On race days we all try to look as though we had just returned from Sandown. I have even seen a man enter jauntily in a Court suit on a Levee day, under the mistaken impression that nobody knew him to be merely an outside broker, who had hired the suit at Nathan's for a fancy ball at Covent Garden. Need I say that he was extremely young? In these, and other ways, we keep up a sort of pretence of enjoying ourselves at the Junior—for eleven months out of the twelve.

But in the twelfth month comes our tribulation. The Junior is closed for repairs, and we are all transferred to the Senior. There a different order reigns, a different tone, a different time of life. And we once more rediscover the old truth that crabbed Age and Youth cannot live together. If age were only crabbed one would not so much mind, but it is bald and somnolent, and it snores, if I may be allowed the colloquialism, nineteen to the dozen. Also, it glares upon the exuberant youthfulness of the Junior visitors. It has an air of asking "who the deuce are you?" and of exclaiming "dash my wig" (for bald age often wears a wig at the Senior) "if this

club isn't being turned into a dashed boarding-school!" Even the hall-porter resents your youth. You have probably begun by making the fatal mistake of running up the club stairs. "Hi, sir," shouts the porter, panting after you, "are you a member?" You explain. "Well, sir," he says, "I've been in this 'ere club twenty year, and I ain't seen a gent run up them stairs before."

Somewhat chastened in spirit, you think that you will be able at any rate to improve your mind by the conversation of your elders. For the Senior is a political club of prehistoric antiquity; here be the sages, the Nestors, gathered together. But it is astonishing what little conversation the sages have—astonishing, until you find a tattered copy of Joe Miller chained to a desk in the library. Old gentlemen make periodical visits to the library and come forth chuckling. You know at once they have been at the Joe Miller—and, if you are wise, you get out of earshot as soon as may be. But then you think you will get political information, the most authentic gossip of the House and the Lobby, and—who knows?—perhaps Cabinet secrets. You are soon undeceived. The one topic that nobody ever mentions at a great political club is politics. I remember that on a great political night—it was the occasion of a hotly contested by-election—I went into the Senior smoking-room, expecting to find the place seething with excitement. What I found was half a dozen bald old gentlemen—the oldest and the baldest in the club, I feel sure—none of whom had so much as troubled to

look at the result of the polling on the tape. Two were chuckling quietly over a free-and-easy cartoon in the *Vie Parisienne.* One was complaining testily to the waiter that the club Scotch whisky was not so good as the last lot. The three others were sound asleep.

Perhaps you resolve to take it out of the wine. They are famous for their wine at the Senior, whereas for our wine at the Junior we are—or ought to be—infamous. Foolish man! You have not reckoned with the butler. That wily person knows of old that the members of the Junior always play havoc with the Senior wine, so much older and cheaper than their own. Wherefore, determined to keep the pick of the cellar for his own members, he tells you blandly when you have carefully fixed upon some '75 claret at a ridiculously low figure, "Very sorry, sir, last bottle has just been ordered." You can see the lie on the caitiff's face, but you have to grin and bear it.

You end by being thoroughly miserable. All your habits are changed. The steward won't let you take your own seat at dinner. The servants, knowing that you are not going to subscribe to *their* Christmas fund, neglect you. You can't back your dinner-bill, because the committee won't entertain complaints from visitors. And even in the lavatories they annoy you by using Somebody's Old Brown Windsor, whereas at the Junior you have always been accustomed to Thingamy's Unscented. As for the umbrellas, don't imagine you are going to take your revenge out of them, for there is not an umbrella at the Senior worth—borrowing. I draw a

veil over the rest of the dismal picture. But, I repeat, it is as well that the ladies should know what an Abomination of Desolation a club really is—especially when it is the club which you only visit one month out of the twelve.

The Misfortunes of Sadi.—Man is born to sorrow, as the sparks fly upward. Sadi was born at Naishapur, and to sorrow, in due season, as you shall hear. When still of tender age he was articled to an eminent and old-established firm of dramatic critics. And first he was set to learning by rote the common forms of his future profession. Every morning he would be bidden to write out in a fine round hand such verses of the Koran as bore upon his calling—to wit, "Miss Thingamy has made great strides in her profession," "The comic relief was safe in the hands of Mr. So-and-So," "In the second act the fun grows fast and furious," and "The accomplished actor-manager has surpassed all his previous efforts." By punctuality and strict attention to business the young Sadi acquired facility and was allowed to try his prentice hand on the amateurs at the hall named by the Fheringis after their patron saint, George, the army contractor, of Cappadocia. Then he was ready to go into the world, and received the benediction and advice of an old and valued client of the firm, by name Pinero Effendi. This Effendi was a playwright, and had been a player, and was therefore justly held learned in the secrets of dramatic criticism. Moreover, he was what was known at Naishapur as a "public man," and it

was the peculiar function of their "public men" to discourse about everything. Their great, and only, warrior, Wolseley Pasha, was often asked to distribute the prizes to art classes, and their Chief Mollah, of Canterbury, to lecture on the breaking-strain of girders to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

"My boy," said Pinero Effendi—"My boy" was the orthodox greeting of their players—"hear the words of wisdom, that thy days may be long in the land and the myrtle may flourish on the tomb of thy father's father. The business of the dramatic critic is praise, praise, praise. Praise is the vital need of the artist. It is mere journeymen's work to condemn. Esteem lightly your privilege of condemning in remembering that it is in your power to praise. Those critics whose fame lives with us, whose services are best remembered, are the men who never missed an opportunity of praising thoroughly. Allah be with you, my boy, and do you wrap these precepts in the folds of your turban."

Behold young Sadi, then, launched on his career, steadfastly purposing never to miss an opportunity of praising thoroughly. His first adventure was with a performance of Shakespeare, the great poet of Naishapur, compared with whom Hafiz is but as the earthen pot to the brazen pot, Omar but as the wine-lees to the wine. Sadi praised all the declamatory verses which "brought down the house"—and lo! they were written not by Shakespeare, but by an inconsiderable poetaster, one Colley Cibber. He praised all the "new readings"

—and it proved that they were due to the deafness of the player in conjunction with the nervousness of the prompter, who had turned over two pages at once. He praised the construction and arrangement of the scenes —"after all, Shakespeare is your man for the 'well-made' piece," Sadi wrote in rapture—and they turned out to be the invention of the stage-manager. He praised the musical setting, "with the quaint Elizabethan modulations"—due, it was straightway shown, to Schubert and Dr. Arne. He praised the fifth act as the best in the play—and he was told that beyond doubt it was the work not of Shakespeare, but of a minor writer, one Fletcher. And Pinero Effendi pointed out that praise of Shakespeare was not wanted, because, obviously, an "artist" who was dead could not have any "vital need." Then Sadi grieved sore, and poured dust upon his garments, and shaved his head, and went unclean until the Fast of Ramazan.

He tried again, this time upon a new play. For, he thought, the new is better. But this was before he had seen it. When he saw it he knew that its morality was cant and its characters were hypocrites. But he praised the author for "bringing a breath of wholesome Naishapur air over the footlights," and said that to this play "a daughter could safely bring her mother." The chief player was decrepit and a ranter. Sadi called him "that proved veteran, who has delighted many generations of playgoers," said that "he alone preserved the almost lost art of diction," and alluded pathetically to

the "constant service of the antique world." Sadi added that the acting manager was "courteous and indefatigable," and that "no expense had been spared to render this production worthy of the best traditions of our National Theatre." And Sadi went to his tent rejoicing. "My fame will live," said he, "for I have not missed an opportunity of praising." But next morning the editor of the sheet wherein Sadi wrote called him dog, and son of a djinn, and smote him with a thick stick, saying "Didst thou not know, O Sadi, that these people withdrew their advertisement a fortnight gone? You can take a month, O child of Ahriman!" And Sadi wept salt tears, and abode with the town beggars and one-eyed kalendars that stand without the gate.

But when his wounds were healed, and the heat came again into his breast, Sadi anointed his body with myrrh and frankincense, and remembered once more that it was in his power to praise. It befell at this time that a syndicate of the more wealthy merchants of Naishapur had taken a theatre for an actress of the place, out of respect, bordering upon reverence, for her intellectual charms. It also happened, by chance, that she was young and comely of aspect. And Sadi felt that here was another opportunity for praise, praise, praise. For thus, he reflected, he might, as Muhammad writes, kill two bulbuls with one lump of jade, by ministering to the vital needs of the young artist and obtaining a daily portion of white bread and fine salt from the syndicate. So he

said that the actress had a face rounder than the moon, and eyes deeper than the well beside the waste. The white gazelles of Thibet, he went on, were not more fleet of foot than she, and her voice, he declared, reminded him of the nightingale in the Rubáiyát that cries "in divine High-piping Péhlevi." Next day a young man called who said he was the white gazelle's brother, and asked if Sadi's intentions were honourable, and could not be persuaded to depart without much baksheesh. And Sadi's wife—for he was now married—belaboured him with her slipper, and called him "You beast" (after the wont of the second wife of the Sheikh Tanqueray), and said he ought to be ashamed of himself, with his round moon-faces.

And Sadi's heart sank within him, and he groaned, "Though I have never missed an opportunity of praising thoroughly, yet are my services not remembered—or remembered to my hurt. And while I have ministered to the vital needs of the artist, my vital needs are not satisfied, but are met with revilings and even with blows." Pinero Effendi only chuckled. "My boy," said he, "when I taught you the critic's business was praise, praise, praise, I was thinking not of the authorised reviewers but of the auxiliary critics." "But, tell me, O Effendi," asked Sadi, "wherein is the difference between an authorised and an auxiliary critic? Why should one praise and the other not praise?" "O thou foolish Sadi," answered the Effendi, "Allah in his infinite wisdom hath so ordered it, and if thou dost not see why,

thou art an ass for thy pains." And the boys of Naishapur fell upon Sadi and bastinadoed him until the sun went down.

Sir Roger de Coverley in Fleet Street.—My Friend Sir Roger de Coverley, when we last met together at the Club, told me, that he had a great mind to see the Offices of the *Twinkler* Evening Newsletter. For it was used to be our Custom at Sir Roger's, upon the coming in of the Post, to sit about a Pot of Coffee, and hear the old Knight read the Pink Extra Special Edition; which he does with his Spectacles upon his Nose, and in an audible Voice, smiling very often at those little Stroaks of Satyr which are so frequent in the Writings of the *Twinkler* Man. I have not adventured, said he, so far as Fleet Street these twenty Years, for fear the Mohocks should be Abroad. However, if you will make one with Captain Sentry and myself to-morrow night, and will call upon me about four a-Clock, I will have my own Coach in readiness to attend you, for *John* tells me he has got the Fore-Wheels mended. Nay, said I, 'tis at ten a-Clock of the Morning you must come, seeing that the Brats cry the *Twinkler* for Sale when our Town Beaux are still Abed; whereat the good Knight laughed heartily and vowed that it served the Sluggards right. Thinking to smoak him, I whispered you must have a Care, for all Fleet Street is Up, but he was not to be daunted, saying he minded well when all the West Country was Up with Monmouth; and the Captain bid Sir

Roger fear nothing, for that he had put on the same Sword which he had made use of at the Battel of *Steenkirk*.

When we had convoy'd him in safety to Fleet Street and he had descended from his Coach amid the Crowd of Boys pushing and striving to get at the Second Edition, my old Friend looked about him with that Pleasure, which a Mind seasoned with Humanity naturally feels in its self, at the Sight of a Multitude of People who partake of the same common Employment. He straightway engaged in a Conference with the Door Keeper, who is a notable prating Gossip, and stroak'd the Office Boy upon the Head, bidding him be a good Child and mind his Book. We were no sooner come upstairs, but we were surrounded with a Crowd of Sub-Editors, offering us their several Prognostications or, as themselves do call them, Tips for the City and Suburban, until Captain Doe came out from an inner Room in a Fury and shouted in Old Joe's shrill Treble above the general din that his were the only Finals. Sir Roger grasped the Captain warmly by the hand, asking him what Regiment he was of and whether he had served her Majesty in the *Low Countries*, adding several Reflections on the Greatness of the *British* Land and Sea Forces, with many other honest Prejudices which naturally cleave to the Heart of a true *Englishman*. Whereat the Captain swore worse than ever.

Upon our enquiring for the Editor, we were assured that he was not in his Room, this being his hour for con-

ferring with Lady Contributors. Soon, however, he came to us in a Wig that seemed still undressed, and excused himself that he had been kept with a Wench that clamoured for two Guineas in Consideration of a Schedule of latest Fashions from Paris, and would take no denying. On my word, exclaimed the worthy Knight, a notable young Baggage! I warrant you, he added, with a more than ordinary Vehemence, she is a Widow; these Widows, sir, are the most perverse Creatures in the World. But the Editor would not converse with us about Widows nor Mainly About People of either Sex, muttering to himself that Homers were the best of the Bunch. Thinking to pour Oil upon the troubled Waters, I observed that Homer was in truth the most elegant and ingenious of the Classick Writers, but it presently appeared that the Editor was but musing upon the Doves of that Name. For drawing us Aside, one of the Fellows of the Staff whispered (tapping his Brow significantly) that this was the Editor's Whim, to esteem Doves and all Sorts of Fowls above Men, so that the very Walls of his Room were furnished with Pigeon Holes. It further appeared that, in order to humour his distraught intellects, they filled the first and third Editions of the *Twinkler* with naught but discourse of Birds; which is a sufficient Reason why those Editions cannot be bought of Hawkers. It was also affirmed (but this, I think, by Waggs) that the only Birds in the publick Editions are of that Species which the French call *Canards*. Sir Roger offered to show the Editor the

best Cock Fighting in all Worcestershire, and went away fully satisfied with the Entertainment. I was highly pleased, for my own part, not only with our Visit, but with the Satisfaction which it had given to the good old Man.

THE END

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